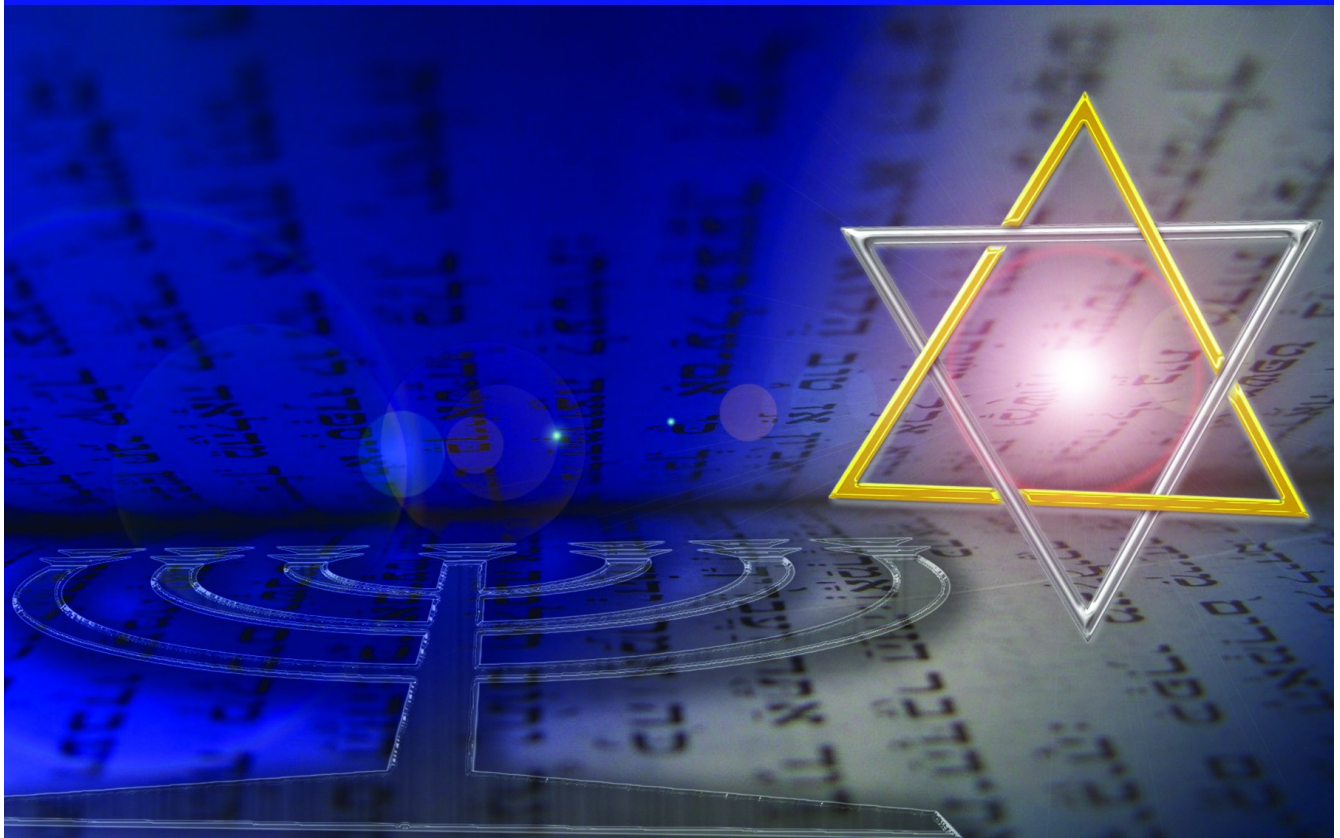


THE LAST MYSTERY IN THE BIBLE



**The King of Kings Reveals
The Seven Mountains Where
Mystery Babylon Sits**

THE LAST MYSTERY IN THE BIBLE

Volume I

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the Seven Mountains Where Mystery
Babylon Sits**

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REVELATION 17

1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:
2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
5. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon The Great, The Mother Of Harlots And Abominations Of The Earth.
6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.
7. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.
8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the

earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.
10. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.
11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.
12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.
13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.
14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.
15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.
16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.
17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.
18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

INTRODUCTION



In Revelation 17, we are told of a scarlet colored beast with seven heads and a harlot that sits upon the beast. The seven heads are described as seven mountains and seven kings. We are also told that the harlot sits upon the seven mountains. The word “mystery” last appears in the Bible in Revelation 17:7. Both the beast with seven heads and the harlot are referred to as a mystery. For centuries Christians have debated the meaning of the seven mountains where the harlot sits. These mountains are associated with great blasphemy and the rule over all the kingdoms of the world. What no one has done is to show that there is a distinct group of seven mountains in the Bible that holds the answer to the seven mountains of Revelation 17. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. The Word of God is silent about the Seven Hills of Rome. Revelation speaks of seven mountains, not hills. The Greek word *oros* is translated as *mountain* throughout the book of Revelation.¹ Rome does not have any mountains. Likewise, the site of the ancient city of Babylon is not associated with seven mountains.

Throughout the Bible and across the ages, the mountains of Israel have witnessed the conflicts between God’s people and their enemies. These were the sites where the Son of God confronted and defeated

Satan and his demons. They are the focus of the world today. In the future, the whole world will again be fixated on these biblical heights. These mountains are intimately associated with the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. The final conflict at the end of this age will take place amid the mounts of Israel.

The purpose of this book is to show that there is a distinct group of seven mountains revealed in the Bible by the revelator of the mysteries of God. The Bible reveals that seven successive kingdoms/empires rule over these mountains throughout history. These mountains are associated with the rule over all kingdoms and all upon the earth and in heaven. No mountains are more associated with the truth, power, and glory of God. However, no mountains have witnessed greater blasphemy. It is from these mountains that the rule and law of the eternal righteous kingdom will go forth to all the earth. The mystery of the seven mountains and seven kings is found in the last book of the New Testament, but the answer to the mystery is given in the first book. God provides the answer to the question before the question ever arises

Revelation 17 is the expansion of truth already revealed in the book of Daniel. The prophet Daniel reveals there is an unseen spiritual conflict that has been going on throughout the ages. This conflict concerns the rise and fall of the kingdoms of the world. Satan does not want the people of God and the world to know the truth about the rise of the Antichrist and his kingdom. Since Satan tried so hard to stop Daniel from receiving the prophecy about the rise of kingdoms that rule over Israel and the rise of the Antichrist, we should try our utmost to understand the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation.²

This book is the first of a two-part series dealing with the last mystery in the Bible. The purpose of this two-part series is to look to the revelator of Revelation and the revelator of the mysteries of God to interpret the last mystery in the Bible. Many have sought to understand the seven mountains and seven kings from the words of pagans and this has led to many interpretations that do not have a biblical foundation. Many pick a city and try to make the Scriptures fit their interpretation.

The correct path is to look to the Bible to understand the prophetic symbols in Revelation 17. Let the Word of God lead us to the identity of the beast with seven heads and the harlot. We will look to Jesus, who is wisdom incarnate, to understand the seven mountains and seven kings. We will lay down a biblical foundation for identifying both Mystery Babylon and the kingdom of the Antichrist. Our foundation is not the words of men or ideas from the minds of men. Our foundation is the Son of God and God's Holy Word. There can be no greater foundation.

1



The Seven Mountains Where Mystery Babylon Sits are Revealed in the Bible

The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ to his servants about prophetic events at the end of this age. It tells about the tribulation of the saints and the final victory of Jesus over the forces of evil. It speaks about the final judgment of the rebellious and the future glorious kingdom of the Messiah. Jesus is returning to change the governance of the nations of the world. Christians throughout history have professed difficulty with the book of Revelation because of its apocalyptic nature, visions, and many symbols. Many have especially considered Revelation 17 to be enigmatic. Revelation 17 is one of the most important and debated prophetic chapters in the Bible. It is the master key to unlock the whole book of Revelation.³ When studying these passages, we must follow the proper principles of biblical interpretation. If

our understanding of this chapter is not correct, the interpretation of other passages in the book of Revelation will be flawed.

In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, John sees a woman described as a harlot sit on a scarlet-colored beast with seven heads. The beast's heads are described as seven mountains and seven kings. "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space (Rev. 17:9-10)." The woman has a name written on her head that reads, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth." The Bible tells us the woman has a kingdom over the kings of the earth. She is also called a great city. To know the identity of the woman, we must understand the symbolism of the beast with seven heads.

There are many interpretations of the seven mountains and seven kings. Unfortunately, some of these interpretations are based on the words of men. Some look to the so-called Seven Hills of Rome and the emperors of Rome, while others contrive seven mountains/hills in Jerusalem and other cities. Others claim the mountains merely symbolize kingdoms. There are serious problems with these interpretations. The Bible should be our source for understanding the symbols in Revelation. We will show that all the kingdoms of the world are associated with a distinct group of seven mountains in the Bible.

Some questions of utmost importance must be answered about the seven mountains and seven kings if one is searching for their meaning. These questions should be considered evident, but they are ignored by most. Since the book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ, is there a distinct group of seven mountains revealed by him? Revelation depicts the conflict between the Lamb of God and the beast. This conflict also includes the followers of the Lamb and the followers of the beast. Is there a group of seven mountains in the Bible associated with the confrontation of God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom? Is there a

group of seven mountains in the Bible associated with the confrontation between the King of Kings and Satan?

The woman that sits on the seven mountains reigns over the kingdoms of the earth. Is there a group of seven mountains in the Bible associated with the rule over all the kingdoms and the nations of the world? Revelation speaks of events taking place in the physical and spiritual realms. Is there a group of seven mountains connected with the rule over the physical and spiritual realms?

The scarlet-colored beast is associated with blasphemy; we know that this must also be true about the seven mountains and seven kings. Blasphemy can involve speaking evil about God, but it also occurs with the desecration of something holy. Does this mean the mountains were previously associated with holiness?⁴ Is there a group of seven mountains revealed by Jesus that is associated with holiness and great blasphemy? If we look to the Bible and Jesus, we find that all the answers to these questions are in the affirmative. There is one final question. Why have so many ignored these seven mountains so intimately connected to the rule over the kingdoms of the earth when interpreting Revelation 17?

There is mention of a need for wisdom to know the meaning of the seven mountains and seven kings. Some turn to the words of Roman poets and Roman emperor chronology. Others focus on pagan religions to understand the symbols. The Son of God and the Word of God are the real sources of wisdom. There are hundreds of references from the Old Testament found in Revelation. To understand the symbols in this prophetic book, we must look at the meaning applied to them in the Old Testament and especially the book of Daniel. Revelation and Daniel both have heaven and earth in view.⁵ In Daniel, we have beasts that symbolize kingdoms that rise to rule over Israel and her mountains. We will see that the beast in Revelation 17 also concerns kingdoms under satanic control that rise to rule over Israel's mountains.

In the book of Daniel, we find the first use of the word “mystery” in the Bible. The last time the word “mystery” appears in the Bible, it is found in Revelation 17. The angel refers to both the beast with seven

heads and the harlot (great city) as a mystery (Rev. 17:7). There is an intimate connection between both these mysteries. If we are to understand the meaning of the words spoken by the angel, we must understand the biblical meaning of the word “mystery,” the first time it occurs, and its meaning throughout the Bible. A biblical mystery is not something that is known by the wisdom of man. A biblical mystery does not refer to something unknowable. A biblical mystery is something revealed by God in his Holy Word.

In Revelation 1:8, Jesus reveals he is the “alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” This truth is also mentioned in Revelation 1:11, 21:26, and 22:13. Jesus reveals the meaning of the first mystery in Revelation about the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks. There is no reason why we should not believe Jesus would also reveal the meaning of the seven mountains and seven kings concerning the “last mystery” in the Bible. The word “wisdom” also appears last in the Bible in Revelation 17. Jesus is the one that reveals the mysteries of God. He is wisdom incarnate. He is the infallible source in interpreting Scripture.

To underscore that the information the angel revealed to John is a divine mystery, we find the Greek word “reveal” (*deiknumi*) in Revelation 17:1. This verb means *the uncovering of divine revelation*.⁶ The Bible reveals the harlot’s name is on her forehead. The harlot has a three-part descriptive name. The word “mystery” precedes Babylon the Great. It is a clear indication that this Babylon should not be interpreted literally. To make it clear that this Babylon is a divine mystery, God names her Mystery. In Revelation 11, the great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. However, by using the name Mystery, the Holy Spirit is revealing that this Babylon cannot refer to the ancient city of Babylon, but “a secret use of the word.”⁷ It is correct to call the woman on the beast “Mystery Babylon” because both words are part of her name. The mystery not only concerns her name, but it also involves her identity and the spiritual foundation for her rule over the kingdoms of the earth.

The first mystery in the Bible found in the book of Daniel concerns

successive empires that rise to world prominence. The truth in the book of Daniel must be used to interpret the book of Revelation. What is the commonality shared by each empire? It was not some unique false religious system as some claim. The cultures and religions of the empires were pagan, but they were also quite different. The commonality is that each empire ruled over the mountains and the throne of Israel. “If all of the land of the empires was put on one map, Palestine would be in the center.”⁸ The Bible reveals that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth. “Thus saith the Lord God; This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries that are round about her” (Ezek.5:5).

Daniel reveals another essential truth. With each imperial power that rises to be the head over Israel, there is a satanic principality. The holy angels of the Lord oppose these evil forces. Satan has a kingdom comprised of evil principalities, which he has used to advance his rule over the mountains and people of God. We can see the importance of the message that Daniel received in the eleventh chapter. Satan tried his utmost to prevent it from reaching him.⁹ We should realize that this is also true concerning Revelation 17. Behind the stage of world politics and conflicts, there is a spiritual battle taking place. Revelation 17 is an expansion of the truth revealed in Daniel. Therefore, the last time the word “mystery” is used in the Bible; it is also about successive empires/kingdoms that rule over Israel and her mountains.

In the book of Daniel, the power of the kingdoms represented by beasts is taken away and is given to “one like the Son of man” coming with the clouds of heaven. This Son of man comes before the “Ancient of Days.” “And there was given unto him dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14). There is a group of seven mountains revealed in the Bible that is related to the “clouds of heaven” and all the kingdoms of the world.

The wisdom of men cannot fathom the mysteries of God. The Bible is the interpreter of the Bible. We can be assured that when Revelation

17 speaks of seven mountains, they are to be found somewhere else in the Word of God. One could search from Genesis to Revelation and not see any mention of Rome and its so-called seven hills. Other kingdoms ruled over Israel, but in Revelation, the seven kings refer to only seven specific ones. Many agree that the seven kings refer to the kingdoms revealed in Daniel and the empires of Egypt and Assyria. If God reveals the seven kingdoms in the Bible, why should we not believe that he would also reveal the seven mountains?

Many take the path of Nicodemus when interpreting the seven mountains. The popular belief is that Mystery Babylon is a city built on seven mountains. The symbolism given in Revelation 17 does not support this assumption. The mountains or hills of a city innately belong to the city. The hills of Rome are part of Rome. If the seven mountains were the Seven Hills of Rome, they would belong to the harlot (city). The Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion.

The seven mountains are found on the seven heads of the beast and therefore belong to the beast, not the city (harlot).¹⁰ The attempt to apply the seven mountains to Rome or some other city is an exercise in futility. The seven mountains are descriptive of the beast and the seven heads, not the harlot.¹¹ They are an integral aspect of the beast. A beast in the Bible is symbolic of a kingdom. It can symbolize the kingdom of Satan or a kingdom of the world under satanic influence. Since a beast is symbolic of a kingdom, one should not look to find the seven mountains in a city but should look for the mountains in a kingdom. What supports a city is a kingdom.

The seven kings symbolize seven successive empires that rule over a specific land area and are under the influence of satanic power. The seven mountains reveal the specific location. The Bible contains all the information needed to interpret the beast and its seven heads. We do not need to look to the words of Roman poets! One must look to history to see the fulfillment of a biblical prophecy, but the interpretation of Scripture is made from Scripture.¹² On this fact alone, the notion that the seven mountains and seven kings symbolize Rome and seven emperors

fails. It should be obvious to all that the seven mountains would be revealed in the Bible.

What does the Bible mean when it states the harlot sits on seven mountains? The Greek word *kathemai* (*to be seated*) can denote sovereignty over the kings and mountains, such as a queen that sits on a throne.¹³ That is in line with what is written in Revelation 18. “How much she glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she sayeth in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Rev. 18:7). This word is used about God sitting on his throne. It occurs about Jesus sitting on the glory cloud in his return to reign over the earth. Jesus has been given all authority and power and he is returning to one of a distinct group of seven mountains in the Bible. This word is also used concerning the twenty-four elders who are involved in a role in God’s kingdom (Rev. 4:2, 11:16, 14:14).

The rule that the harlot exerts is antithetical to the rule of God and his chosen. The harlot has sovereignty over the kingdoms of the earth, and she sits (established) on a distinct group of seven mountains. The harlot is called a mystery. She reigns over the kingdoms of the world. Her rule is based on spiritual truth revealed in the Bible, not on the political power of one earthly kingdom. The seven mountains must be identified with all the kingdoms of the earth.

There is a distinct group of seven mountains revealed in the Bible by Jesus, the revelator of the mysteries of God. These mountains are associated with the rule over all kingdoms, and all on the earth and in heaven. These mountains are in a kingdom whose boundaries are set by God and whose throne belongs to the Son of God. If asked to count the mountains in the first Gospel, many would say there are eight, while others would say there are nine. Many would count the Temple Mount, while others would include Golgotha (Calvary). Neither site is called a mountain in Matthew. We must understand why this is the case. Rather than trying to figure out the meaning of the seven mountains by our reasoning or contriving mountains to fit our interpretation, we need to see what the Holy Spirit reveals.

Satan despises God, but he covets the glory, authority, and power of God. Satan has always targeted the things of God. In his attempt to usurp the rule of God, Satan reasoned he must ascend the mount of God. To usurp the rule of Adam over the earth, he came to Eden, the “garden of God.” The people that Satan has targeted to destroy throughout history are those referred to as the “wife of God.” Satan sought to kill the “Son of God.” Satan used the people called the “chosen of God” to instigate the death of God’s Son. If Satan wanted to rule over the kingdoms of the earth, which mountains would he seek to control? He would attempt to control the mountains identified explicitly with the power, glory, and revelations of God. The mountains of Israel are “God’s mountains,” and the land of Israel is “God’s land.” Satan has focused on Israel and her mountains throughout history!

Where in the Bible should you look for seven mountains associated with the rule over all kingdoms? The simple answer is the kingdom book. In Matthew, the book of the Bible known as the kingdom book, there are “seven places, and only seven” called a mountain by God. These mountains are made a distinct group by the Holy Spirit and the Son of God. This is the most important group of mountains in the world. The Word of God and the Son of God reveal the seven mountains of Revelation 17 are found within Israel.

In the presentation of the Mystery Kingdom of God to Israel, Jesus is upon a distinct group of seven mountains in the kingdom book. What do these seven mountains have to do with the great cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and Satan’s kingdom revealed throughout the Bible and especially the book of Revelation? These mountains have everything to do with this great conflict. In the book of Matthew, “Jesus and Satan are locked in mortal combat, and the power of each is cosmic in scope, extending both to supernatural beings and to the world of humankind.”¹⁴ “Warring against Satan and building the kingdom of God are, for Jesus, one and the same activity.”¹⁵ The coming of the kingdom through Jesus accomplished the vanquishing of Satan and his evil minions.¹⁶ “If we see the work of Jesus as the defeat of Satan and the

destruction of Satan's grip on the world, then suddenly the life, work, death, and resurrection of Jesus assume an impressive unity." "The life of Jesus thus seen is a cohesive, closely knit, ascending battle which reaches its climax in the resurrection."¹⁷

Matthew is a book of triumph and dominion of the Lord's chosen King over all the forces of evil. We will see that the following places called a mountain by God in Matthew are the seven mountains where Mystery Babylon sits: Mountain One (Matt. 4:8), Mountain Two (Matt. 5:1), Mountain Three (Matt. 14:23), Mountain Four (Matt. 15:29), Mountain Five (Matt. 17:1, 17:9, 17:20), Mountain Six (Matt. 21:1, 21:21, 24:3, 26:30), Mountain Seven (Matt. 28:16). Mystery Babylon is the antithesis of the Mystery Kingdom. What is so blasphemous is that Mystery Babylon sits on the same seven mountains where Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God to Israel.

Most have heard of the phrase "you can't see the forest for the trees." It means that one may focus solely on the details and may miss out on the big picture. This phrase doesn't mean you shouldn't focus on the details. The details are extremely important, but so is the overall picture. We believe it can be applied to the seven mountains of Matthew. It isn't by happenstance that many of the important events in Jesus's ministry documented in Matthew take place upon the mountains of Israel. We rightly focus on the important events that transpire with Jesus upon each mountain. However, we miss the importance of seeing these events take place upon a distinct group of seven mountains. We miss the importance of the mountain symbol in the Bible and the theological truths associated with the mountains of Israel.

The seven mountains of Matthew should be viewed as a distinct group. The first mountain has to do with all the kingdoms of the world. The seventh mountain has to do with all power in heaven and earth. The first mountain witnesses Jesus's defeat of Satan's temptation concerning the rule over all the kingdoms of the world. The announcement on the seventh mountain can be viewed as a proclamation that the complete and eternal defeat of Satan and his kingdom has been accomplished. All

power is given to Jesus “in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:16). Mystery Babylon is said to have a reign over the kingdoms of the earth. If you want to understand the rule over the kingdoms of the earth then the seven mountains of Matthew hold the key.

The number seven in the Bible symbolizes perfection and completion. Jesus is the only perfect man. Understandably, the number seven would have vital importance in the Bible about him.¹⁸ On the seven mountains in Matthew, the Son of God reveals the perfect will of the Father. It is from these mountains that the rule and law of the eternal righteous kingdom will go forth and spread across all the earth.

The seven mountains and seven kings are associated with great blasphemy and the rule over the kingdoms of the earth. No mountains have witnessed more of the revelations and the power of God than the mountains of Israel. However, no mountains have seen greater blasphemy. Rebellious Israel worshiped false gods and sacrificed the children of God on pagan altars of fire upon the high places. The Bible reveals that seven successive kingdoms rule over a distinct group of seven mountains in Israel. To reign over the mounts and land of Israel is an act of blasphemy, for God is her true King.¹⁹ In his attempt to usurp the rule of the Lord in heaven, Satan reasoned that he had to ascend to the mount of the Lord. He realized the mount/mountain was the site of the holy throne. His blasphemous rebellion ended with him cast from the sacred mount. The Bible reveals that spiritual power and authority are associated with mountains.

Jesus’s life, ministry, death, and resurrection accomplished complete victory. The seven mountains are center stage in the epic defeat revealed in Matthew by the Holy Spirit. From one of the seven mountains, Jesus ascended to heaven to reign at the right hand of the Father. The King of Kings will return to this same mountain to enact eternal judgment on the forces of evil and all who rebelled against God. There is more spiritual truth, symbolism, and prophecy seen with these mountains than any other mountains or hills in the world. However, the so-called wise men

of the world have not considered these mountains when interpreting Revelation 17.

Some may view the actions of Jesus during his ministry as merely good deeds and excellent teaching. While Jesus did manifest the love, truth, and mercy of God, the deeds of Jesus were acts of power. The kind of power that even a member of the Sanhedrin recognized came from God. They were the acts of a warrior engaged in spiritual warfare. Whenever Jesus healed the sick or cast out demons, he was revealing the Lord's power over Satan. The kingdom of Satan rests on lies and deception. Whenever Jesus taught the truth of God, the very foundations of Satan's kingdom began to crumble. Jesus came to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). He came to defeat the rulers and authorities (Col. 2:15), and he came to destroy the devil who has the power of death (Heb. 2:14). If we believe these proclamations found in the Word of God, then we know beyond any doubt that Jesus has already defeated all rulers and all authorities. Although their defeat has already taken place, the enactment of their eternal judgment is yet in the future. Until that time, we must still contend with evil nations under Satan's influence.

Upon seven mountains in Matthew, the kingdom of God demonstrated by the Son of God assaulted Satan and his kingdom. In the midst of these mountains, the King of Kings eternally defeated the forces of evil. On these mountains, the Antichrist will be trodden down. In the future, King Jesus will return to these mountains to enact eternal judgment against all the forces of evil men and evil principalities. We must consider this distinct group of mountains when interpreting Revelation 17.

A long-held interpretation is that the "great city" of Revelation 17 is Rome. Some go so far as to claim that no doubt can be entertained about this interpretation.²⁰ They do not believe the Bible alone is enough to interpret this critically important chapter. Supposedly, without the words of Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Cicero, and other Roman writers, Christians would be at a loss to understand the seven mountains and seven kings.²¹

Those who believe this interpretation equate the seven mountains to Rome because the Roman poets referred to it as the City of Seven Hills. They claim the seven kings refer to the seven Roman emperors. They point to the fact that Rome was the enemy and persecutor of the early church. This interpretation became popular after the Reformation. The presumption is that the mountains are within a city, and this is to show a location. Unfortunately, the mountains become mere background props with no spiritual significance. We have devoted a chapter on the myth of the seven hills of Rome.

Many still believe and promote the Rome/Roman emperor interpretation. The words of the angel about wisdom should be considered a warning. The so-called apparent answer is not always the correct answer.²² The Bible is silent about the Seven Hills of Rome. Revelation speaks of seven mountains, not hills.²³ There is no mention of a distinct group of seven Roman emperors in the Bible. Over the last century, many notable Bible scholars have rejected the idea that Rome is Babylon the Great. This interpretation is based on conjectures and assumptions dreamed up in the minds of men.

Those who interpret the seven mountains to be the Seven Hills of Rome are not interpreting the prophetic passage from the Bible. They would have us believe we are to understand something that requires wisdom and something God calls a mystery based on the words of superstitious pagans. If the wisdom needed is not found in Jesus and in the Word of God, it cannot be found. The words of pagan poets form the foundation of the Seven Hills of Rome interpretation.²⁴ The founding of the city of Rome is associated with myths and legends and we will see that the so-called seven hills of Rome are likewise. It is one of the greatest exegetical fallacies.

Minear highlights an important fact. The seven heads belong to the beast rather than Mystery Babylon (the harlot). The seven heads found in Revelation 12:3 and later in Revelation 13:1 describe the dragon and the beast from the sea.²⁵ The dragon with seven heads in Revelation 12 points to Satan. Johnson asserts that there is no logical reason not to

associate the beast of Revelation 17 with the beast that has seven heads in Revelation 13 (the Antichrist possessed by Satan) and the dragon with seven heads in Revelation 12.²⁶ The beast in Revelation 17 ultimately symbolizes Satan and satanic rule.

The beast and the harlot are symbolic of two distinct things. Minear states that John makes a distinction between God's punishment of the harlot (Babylon) (Rev. 18:1-19:1) and the judgment faced by the beast and the kings (Rev. 19:19-21). If Rome is Babylon, the beast is the Roman Empire, and the kings are the emperors of the Roman Empire living in Rome, then there is a problem. Since they all refer to the same historical entity, this would not make any sense.²⁷

The term "heads" points to those in control. Satan is the source of all evil rule. The heads belong to the beast that ascends from the bottomless pit. This fact alone should be enough to show that this beast transcends the physical realm. It is no ordinary kingdom of the earth. The rule in question also transcends the political rule of one empire. The heads of the beast must be figurative of the source of evil influence over the kingdoms of the world. Since Satan is not omnipresent, we can conclude that the heads must also be symbolic of the spiritual and earthly agents of Satan.

The beasts in Daniel and the beast in Revelation 17 depict the rule over Israel and her mountains by successive kingdoms under satanic control. The first time we find the word "mystery" in the Bible is in the book of Daniel. This mystery concerned a dream by the king of Babylon. Daniel did not seek the answer to this mystery by looking to the ancient religion of Babylon, the words of men, or to his wisdom. He looked to God to provide the answer. What is the justification for interpreting the "last mystery" about the beast with seven heads and the harlot from the words of ancient Romans or the comparative study of pagan religions?

Israel is no ordinary kingdom, for the Lord is her true King. Some of the interpretations of the mountains and kings focus on hills or kingdoms associated with the power and the rule of men. Instead, we should focus on seven mountains at the epicenter of the conflict between God's

kingdom and the kingdom of Satan. We should focus on seven mountains in the Bible that are linked to the rule and power of God and his Son over all in heaven and the earth.

Some do not believe the seven mountains of Revelation symbolize real mountains. They think a mountain in the Bible is commonly used to signify an earthly kingdom under the rule of man. They contend the mountains and kings in Revelation 17 both symbolize kingdoms. What they do not explain is the reason for the redundancy. The seven stars and the seven candlesticks in Revelation 1:20 do not symbolize the same thing, and neither do the seven mountains and seven kings.

Two of the passages most cited are Isaiah 2:2-3 and Daniel 2:35. Both passages look forward to a time in the future when the Lord's kingdom will depose the rule of men. It is ridiculous to use these passages as evidence that a mountain is symbolic of an earthly kingdom under the rule of men. The mountains in these passages stand for the exact opposite. We will look at all the passages cited to bolster their interpretation of the mountain symbol. We will see that they do not support their claim. First and foremost, the mountain in the Bible symbolizes spiritual authority and power. The Bible reveals that the kingdoms of this world are under the control of spiritual powers.

The best refutation of the assertion that the seven mountains and seven kings both represent kingdoms is the Bible. The Bible reveals the kingdom of Satan is the antithesis of the kingdom of God.²⁸ There is a distinct group of seven mountains in the Bible that have been at the epicenter of a great spiritual conflict. These same mountains will witness prophetic events that will take place at the end of this age. These mountains are associated with the cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and the forces of evil.

There are five hundred and thirty-six instances where the words mount, mounts, and mountains appear in the Bible.²⁹ There are many passages throughout the Bible, where mountains are related to the sanctuary and the presence of God. They are associated with spiritual revelations and spiritual power. The book of Daniel reveals the rise and fall of

successive kingdoms that are symbolized by different beasts and metals. A mountain in Daniel does not symbolize a kingdom under the rule of a mere man. The only kingdom symbolized by a mountain in Daniel is the kingdom of the Messiah. This kingdom will be under the authority and rule of the King of Kings.

It should be evident that Satan, in a blasphemous affront to God, would seek to control the mountains of the earth associated with God's nation, prophets, his Son, and his throne. Satan is full of pride, jealousy, and hatred. Satan failed in his original rebellion and was shamefully removed from his position of authority and was cast from the mount of God. Satan has tried to do on earth what he could not do in heaven. Satan has sought to control the mountains of Israel throughout the ages.

The rule over the seven mountains of Matthew by successive kingdoms, under the influence of satanic principalities, is evidence of great blasphemy. The blasphemous reigns of the kingdoms are antithetical to the governance ordained by the Lord. Mystery Babylon is the antithesis of the Mystery Kingdom.³⁰ One cannot grasp Mystery Babylon's rule over the kingdoms unless it is contrasted to the rule ordained by God for the world. The reign of the harlot on seven mountains and seven kings must be understood in contrast to the kingdom of God revealed and manifested by the King of Kings upon seven mountains in Matthew. Jesus is returning to change the governance of the world. He will put an end to satanic rule and oppressive governments. The kingdom of God will then be manifested over the entire earth.

The distinct group of seven mountains in Matthew is associated with the blessings of the coming kingdom and the rule of King Jesus. On these mountains, Jesus Christ reveals the authority of heaven and the glory and presence of God. He demonstrates the reality of the wisdom and the power of God in Israel. These mountains are associated with the rule over all the kingdoms of the world. This cannot be said about any other mountains on the face of the earth. That is why these mountains have been the focus of evil forces throughout history.

The kingdom of God is identified with a mountain, and the kingdom

of the Messiah is referred to as a mountain. The mountains are the sites where God's covenants, promises, laws, blessings, revelations, and judgments are given. God's prophets, holy angels, and his chosen people are associated with mountains. The mount of God is the site of God's throne. One can clearly understand why the mountain is symbolic of spiritual power and authority.

The seven kings symbolize successive empires/kingdoms in Revelation 17. Israel is the focus of Revelation, and she is the focus of these kingdoms. The world powers are mentioned because of their relationship with Israel, God's chosen nation.³¹ The mountains in Isaiah and Ezekiel are associated with conflicts. Clifford points out that these conflicts are associated with "kingship."³² This fact is also true with many of the other mountain events in the Bible. Behind these conflicts are two spiritual powers.

There is a problem when people apply only an earthly application in their interpretation of the seven mountains and seven kings. They ignore the fact that above all, Revelation is about two spiritual kingdoms. Some believe the beast of Revelation points to a revived Roman Empire at the end of this age. The beast with seven heads represents more than just one empire and more than the kingdoms of the world and their rulers. These mountains and kings are connected to the rule over the kingdoms of the earth throughout history. They are identified with spiritual kingdoms in conflict throughout the ages. The correct interpretation of the seven mountains and seven kings must explain the spiritual significance of the seven mountains.

The beast in Revelation 17 ultimately symbolizes Satan and satanic rule. In Revelation, we see the Lamb of God with seven horns before the throne of God. The horn is a symbol of rule. The King of Kings presents the kingdom to Israel upon seven places the Holy Spirit calls a mountain in Matthew. We should expect that the beast would also be associated with these same seven mountains.

In Daniel, the stone that becomes a great mountain and covers the whole earth represents the kingdom of Jesus Christ. The stone does not

strike one empire or kingdom. It strikes all the empires symbolized by the great image of Daniel. The Lord chose Israel to be the head of all nations. All the nations and people of the world were to be blessed through her. Due to rebellion and idolatry, kingdoms would rise to be the head of Israel. Satan has directed his hatred against the chosen people of God. He has tried to destroy Israel from without with invading armies and from within with idolatry. His goal throughout the ages has been the control of the mountains in the Bible associated with the King of Kings and the kingdoms revealed in Daniel.

The book of Revelation reveals future events preceding the reign of the righteous kingdom over all the earth. It is about the consummation of the spiritual conflict between the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom. It reveals the King of Kings will come to earth to save the people of God, judge the wicked, and put an end to satanic rule. It is also a tale of two cities. We are told of the glorious city of New Jerusalem descending from heaven. This city contrasts with an earthly city called Mystery Babylon. The foundation of Mystery Babylon is the kingdom of Satan.

In the future, there will be a time of great peril for the people of Israel. At the end of this age, there will be a great city that will represent the full bloom of rebellion of those symbolized by the harlot. Mystery Babylon will not be Rome or a city in Iraq destroyed many centuries ago. Through seven mountains in the Bible, Jesus reveals the "great city" of Revelation 17 will be found within the boundaries of Israel set by the Lord.

What will be the final fate of Israel? "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death (Psalm 118:17-18)." We are told that "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). God's choices are never wrong. There will be a restoration of the people and the nation of Israel to their rightful place in God's eternal plan. With the enactment of eternal judgment against the kingdom of darkness and the end of the evil rule of men and Satan, the rule and law of the righteous kingdom will go forth from the mountains and nation of Israel.

2



Jesus is the Key to Understanding the Seven Mountains Where Mystery Babylon Sits

“**A**nd here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come: and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Rev. 17:9-10). Wisdom is needed to interpret the seven mountains and seven kings. Where can we find wisdom? Where can we go for understanding? These questions were asked many centuries ago in the book of Job. People have sought the answers to these questions throughout the ages. Job realized that true wisdom did not come from men. The book of Proverbs tells us where wisdom and understanding are found. “For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding” (Prov. 2:6).³³ Wisdom resides with God. If wisdom is needed

to understand the seven mountains and seven kings, we need to look to the Word of God.

The Bible speaks of two paths. There is a path that leads to wisdom, and there is a path that leads to folly. Nowhere in the Bible are we ever taught to lean on our understanding or to look to the wisdom of men to understand biblical truth. An interpretation of the seven mountains and seven kings founded on the words of poets, the analysis of Roman Emperor chronology, and the so-called wisdom of men is evidence of folly. What is needed is divine wisdom. How can we know the wisdom of God? The Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth. The Holy Spirit will always lead us to Jesus Christ and God's Word.

The world marveled at the wisdom of King Solomon. Many traveled to Israel to witness his great understanding. Centuries later, wise men from the East came in search of another king of Israel. It has been said that their quest is the pattern of the nations in search of wisdom.³⁴ Their search did not end in the throne room of a great king but rather before an infant in Bethlehem. "And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Lk. 2:40, 52).

The Bible chronicles man's lack of wisdom. Even when we look at two of the greatest and wisest men in the Bible, we see they were also lacking. Solomon had great wisdom, but sin corrupted his mind. He led his people into idolatry, and this led to Israel facing the judgment of God. The consequences of his sins over time did more significant damage to the nation of Israel than any invading army could have done. John the Baptist was a great prophet of God who proclaimed the kingdom of God was at hand. He called for all of Israel to repent. From the words of John the Baptist, while he was in prison, one can question whether even he had doubts about whether Jesus was the Messiah.

There was a man who was greater and wiser than Solomon. There was a man who was the greater king. There was a greater prophet than John the Baptist. As Christians, can we ever speak of wisdom without

speaking of Jesus Christ? The apostle John and the members of the early Church would certainly think not. The Bible reveals that Jesus is the Word and the Wisdom of God. The gospel of John tells us, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus created all things, and through him, all things are maintained. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. Jesus created all things, and through him all things are maintained.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. Every person who has ever been born except Jesus came into the world with the stain and blight of sin. Sin affects the body and mind. All who have accepted Jesus as their Savior are forgiven of their sins, but there is still a struggle with the flesh. Satan can oppress a Christian who does not put on the full armor of God, and the chief battleground is the mind.

The only one who indeed had a “mind of wisdom” was Jesus Christ. He is the only person born of the Holy Spirit. He is the only man who had a mind not corrupted and stained by sin. The phrase “here is the mind which has wisdom” has been translated by many to mean “here is wisdom with understanding.” All wisdom and understanding are found in Jesus. Isaiah 11:2 points to Jesus, the Messiah. The distinguishing traits of the Messiah are the spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

When the angel speaks of the need for wisdom, does he imply difficulty for the people of God in understanding Revelation 17? We know God desires to reveal his truth and mysteries to his people, but he also says his people perish for lack of knowledge. God did not say his people perish for lack of interpretations dreamed up in the minds of men. Are we to think he is referring to the writings of men or political knowledge? Did he say his people perish because they lack knowledge of the chronology of Roman emperor succession or knowledge of pagan religions? We should discern that God is referring to the knowledge of spiritual truth and wisdom in the Bible.

We must consider the association between the mind of Christ spoken by the apostle Paul, and the mind of wisdom spoken of in Revelation

17. There are different Greek words used for the “mind” in the New Testament. The Greek word for the mind, *nous*, which can mean divine or human, is the word Paul used in 1 Corinthians 2:16 when he referred to the mind of Christ.³⁵ This is the word used for mind in Revelation 17. We choose to believe the mind spoken of is the mind of the only one who was human, yet divine. The word for wisdom can also refer to the natural or the spiritual.³⁶ The wisdom referred to is not the wisdom of the world. The wisdom referred to concerns spiritual wisdom. The mind we are talking about is the mind of Christ.

In the Bible, the apostle Paul associated wisdom with Jesus Christ. “But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24). The literal Greek reads, Christ, God’s power, and God’s wisdom. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, “He that Glorifieth, Let Him glory in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:30-31). The failure to discern that the mind of wisdom refers to Jesus has led many to try to interpret this biblical mystery without the correct key.

Dickason cites examples where Satan tempted men to rely on human wisdom. Satan tempted Peter to rely on human wisdom and then deny that Jesus must go to Jerusalem to be handed over to those who would carry out his death. Jesus knew that the one behind Peter’s statement was Satan and issues a rebuke. Satan was also the one who enticed the Corinthians to judge the gospel by human wisdom (1 Cor. 1:18-25, 3:18-4:5; 2 Cor. 4:1-7).³⁷

We can see the result of the wisdom of men in interpreting the seven mountains and seven kings. The wisdom of men looks to the words of pagans to understand the truth and the mysteries of God. Men contrive mountains in Jerusalem and other cities. They change mountains into hills. The wisdom of men creates formulas to make arbitrary lists of emperors to make the seven kings fit Rome. When we look to Jesus, there is no need to contrive anything.

Some associate wisdom with obscurity. They devise many different

interpretations whose foundations are not in the Bible. Unfortunately, those whose focus is on obscurity will often miss the simple truth right before their very eyes. Wisdom and understanding belong to God, and both are revealed in the Son of God. Who can understand the wisdom of God? Only those who belong to Jesus and call him Lord will understand it. “For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16).

Biblical mysteries are like a sturdy padlock. This lock cannot be breached and can only be opened with the proper key. Any lock is easy to open with the right key. The appropriate biblical key can open a biblical mystery for all to see.³⁸ Jesus Christ is the key to unlocking the mysteries of Revelation and the seventeenth chapter. The words of the angel about wisdom do not point to a difficulty in understanding this chapter. We believe the statement about wisdom informs us that it is impossible to understand if we do not look to the Word and Wisdom of God. Wisdom is needed, and Jesus Christ is Wisdom.

In the Jewish mind and the Old Testament, wisdom and prophecy are associated with the Word of God. In the New Testament, the apostles associated wisdom and prophecy with Jesus Christ, the living Word. In his book *Beginning in Moses*, Barrett contends wisdom is a Messianic title. He points out that when the Bible calls God holy, it is referring to a characteristic of his divine nature. The same statements spoken about wisdom in Proverbs are ascribed to the promised Messiah in the Old Testament and Jesus, the Son of God in the New Testament. He asserts that referring to Jesus as wisdom is no different from referring to God as holy since both are describing the characteristics of their divine nature.³⁹

The early Church believed that Proverbs 8 pointed to Jesus the Messiah. This chapter tells us wisdom was in the beginning, and wisdom was with God before the creation. These statements parallel the opening of the book of John. Wisdom in the eighth chapter of Proverbs states, “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.” Barrett points out some misconceptions concerning wisdom in Proverbs. Some have a problem with the fact that the word

is feminine. The reason wisdom is referred to as feminine is based on grammar. The word “wisdom” in Hebrew is feminine.⁴⁰ Some have a problem associating wisdom in Proverbs to Jesus, because of the word “possess.” This word shows a close eternal relationship between wisdom and God, the Father.⁴¹

In Matthew, the mountains and cities are the sites where Jesus preaches and teaches. Wisdom in Proverbs cries out on the “high places” and at the gates of the cities. The Son of God came and lived among his people. He taught the truth and wisdom of God. He revealed the power and glory of God and proclaimed the kingdom of God. The mountains of Israel are chosen to be the prominent sites where these truths are made known and accepted by many people.⁴²

The book of Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ to the Church. Jesus is at the center of all mysteries and prophecies. The mysteries contained in this book are his to reveal. Only the Lamb of God has the power to break the seven seals of the scroll that reveal the coming kingdom of the Messiah and the future judgment on the rebellious of the world. The unveiled truths of the book of Revelation originated with God. The truths in the book of Revelation were given to Jesus Christ. They were then revealed to the apostle John by the angel of the Lord.⁴³

The book of Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of God who has the authority and power of heaven. One cannot speak of the authority and power of God without speaking of the wisdom of God. Suggs, in his book *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel*, points out the association of Jesus and wisdom. There is a discourse between the disciples of John the Baptist and Jesus in both Luke and Matthew. The disciples of John ask Jesus if he is the long-awaited Messiah. There is a striking difference at the end of this discourse seen in Luke 7:35 and Matthew 11:19. Luke has Jesus saying that “wisdom is justified by her children.” Matthew mentions the many works of Jesus in response to the question raised by the followers of John. Matthew recites Jesus as saying, “wisdom is justified by her deeds.” It is asserted that this is a deliberate attempt by Matthew to proclaim that Jesus is wisdom incarnate.⁴⁴

Matthew depicts Jesus as the divine wisdom of God manifested in the flesh.⁴⁵ People from different backgrounds and cultures were astonished at the wisdom Jesus displayed. The crowds that witnessed the great miracles and heard the teaching of Jesus recognized the association of the power of God with the wisdom of God. The people asked, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works (power) (Matt. 13:54)?” His great wisdom silenced those who hated and plotted against him. Luke 11:49 reads, “Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles...” In Matthew 23:34, it is Jesus who states, “Wherefore, behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes...” Jesus is not just a teacher of wisdom. Jesus is wisdom incarnate.⁴⁶

The apostle John did not look to men to know the wisdom and mysteries of God. All that we know about John leads us to believe he focused on Jesus to understand the wisdom and mysteries of God.⁴⁷ The same John who received the revelation of Jesus Christ stated in the Gospel of John that Jesus was the *logos*, or the living Word. In Jewish thought, the wisdom of God is identified with the Word of God.

The word *logos* also refers to reason and wisdom. In the truest sense, it refers to the reason and the wisdom of God that set the universe in motion and by whom all things are controlled and sustained. Barclay paraphrases John when he states that if we desire to see the word and power of God that brought the world into existence, we need to look to Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ All truth and wisdom are found in him.

There is no evidence the early Church, which was mostly Jewish, looked to pagan men to understand the truth of God. There is no evidence that the members of the early Church were students of Roman poetry or emperor chronology. The Jews looked to the Word of God. The early Church would have looked to biblical symbolism and truth rather than pagan.⁴⁹ The first recipients of Revelation would turn to the Word of God to discern the meaning of the seven mountains and seven kings.

Matthew Henry refers to Jesus as the eternal Word and wisdom, the

Logos. “All divine revelation passes through His hand, and centres in him.”⁵⁰ The angel in Revelation 19:10 proclaims, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” At the center of biblical prophecies and the mysteries in the Bible, we find Jesus Christ and the outworking of God’s plan for the redemption of man. It is a mistake to interpret the last mystery in the Bible apart from Jesus Christ, his life, ministry, death, and resurrection.

The Old Testament reveals that the ark of the covenant was symbolic of the throne of God and the presence of God upon the earth. The ark was connected to the mountains. In the Bible and Jewish religious writings, the ark and the temple are associated with wisdom. The high priest sought the mind of God before the ark (Josh. 21:1-2). Jesus fulfilled all the symbolism of the ark and the tabernacle. The ark in the camp of Israel typified Jesus, the Messiah in the midst of Israel. We need to rely on Jesus, the true ark of God, (1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:26-27) to seek the mind of God.⁵¹ Jeremiah wrote of a future day when there will be no need for the ark because Jesus will dwell with his people (Jer. 3:16).

God does not cover his wisdom with a veil of obscurity. No one could ever begin to measure the height and depth of the truth and wisdom of God. Nevertheless, God has chosen to wrap his truth and wisdom in simplicity. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). An uneducated person, ordinary person, or even a child can understand the truth and wisdom of God in the above passage, while the so-called wise men of the world are confounded by it.

The key to unlocking the mystery about Mystery Babylon and the beast with seven heads is King Jesus and the throne of David, which is his rightful throne. How can we understand the rule of the harlot associated with seven mountains? It will only be understood when it is contrasted to the King of Kings, revealing and demonstrating the wisdom and power of the kingdom of God upon seven mountains in the Bible. We can only understand the truth and wisdom of God through the illumination of God’s Word by the Holy Spirit. If people believe the

phrase “the mind which hath wisdom” points to the intellect of a mere man, they have already ventured far down the wrong path.

In an ancient Jewish religious writing, the very origin of wisdom is called a mystery, and wisdom teaches secret things.⁵² The Hebrew word for wisdom is *chokhmah*, and it is associated with the Hebrew word *cowdh*. This word means “secret intimate friendship.” The Hebrew word for wisdom is closely related to the Hebrew word *sod* (mystery). Some believe the book of Job may be the oldest in the Bible. In Job 15:8, the word *chokhmah* is used with the word *cowdh*. The word *cowdh* is derived from a root verb *yacad* (Strong’s no. 3245). This word means to sit down, to found or establish and to support one’s self while leaning or reclining. It indicates an intimate relationship with God.⁵³

Peter, James, and John were the three disciples closest to Jesus. They were the ones chosen to witness his glorious transfiguration upon a mountain. We see the example of *chokhmah* and *cowdh* with John leaning against Jesus when he asks who will be the one that betrays him. Jesus states that it will be the one “that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me” (Matt. 26:23). John is the one who received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. After his resurrection, Jesus opened the understanding (minds) of the disciples so they could understand the Scriptures about the Messiah. If we want to know the truth and wisdom of God, we must have a personal relationship with Jesus and learn to lean on him for our understanding.

The Jews associated the Word of God with wisdom. Some believe the book of Matthew was modeled after the Pentateuch. The purpose was to show that Jesus is the Wisdom of God.⁵⁴ What would be the response if the writer of Matthew had been asked the classic question in Job about the source of wisdom? He would have answered that wisdom was found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.⁵⁵ In the presence of the truth and wisdom of God, the wisdom of man cannot stand. Satan does not want Christians to know the truth about the harlot and the seven-headed beast. Satan is called the “father of lies.” Deception and falsehood have always been his greatest weapons. Satan fears the truth and wisdom

of God. To counter Satan's lies and deceit, Christians need to stay focused on the living Word of God to learn about the mysteries of God. Jesus tells us the meaning of the first mystery in Revelation about the seven stars and the seven candlesticks. We should also look to Jesus to learn the meaning of the last mystery about the seven mountains and seven kings.

The Bible never mentions the Seven Hills of Rome or a group of seven Roman emperors, but the Holy Scriptures speak much about the mountains of Israel and the kings/empires that ruled over these mountains. The destiny of the world is intimately associated with the mountains of Israel, not the hills of Rome. The only seven mountains related to the rule over all kingdoms are the seven places called a mountain in the kingdom book. The only seven mountains associated with six past empires and will be associated with the future empire of the Antichrist are seven mountains revealed by Jesus.

3



The Biblical Meaning of the Mountain Symbol: A Symbol of Spiritual Power and Authority

To understand the seven mountains of Revelation 17, it is of utmost importance that we know the biblical meaning of the mountain symbol. This is the first of three chapters dealing with this very important subject. In the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus reveals that the seven candlesticks symbolize seven churches, while the seven stars symbolize the seven angels of the churches. They symbolize the earthly and the spiritual. The apostle Paul realized the earthly symbolized spiritual truth. Paul said we must first know the earthly meaning before we can comprehend the spiritual meaning. Paul used Hagar to stand for Mount Sinai, which, in turn, symbolized a spiritual covenant (the covenant under the law), and the earthly city of Jerusalem. Sarah stood for the heavenly Jerusalem, which is above. Inherent in Paul's argument is that Sarah also stands for the heavenly mount and

the covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ. The mountain symbol is multivalent. The Bible reveals it has multiple meanings.

Mountains are the loftiest formations of the earth and throughout history have been associated with the spiritual realm. Some of the most significant events recorded in the Bible take place on the mountains. The Bible reveals that spiritual authority is intimately associated with mountains. All power and authority emanate from God. The declaration that God reigns is made on the mountains (Isa. 52:7). His throne is associated with a mountain (Isa. 14:13-14). He dwells on a mountain (Isa. 8:18). God's foundation is in the holy mountains (Ps. 87:1). Mountains in the Bible are associated with spiritual authority, power, and dominion (Exod. 20:18; 1 Kings 18:16-40; 2 Kings 6:17-18; Isa. 40:9-31; Zech. 14:4-5; Matt. 15:29-38, 17, 28). A stone that becomes a great mountain symbolizes the kingdom of the Messiah. The mountains are prominent sites where God chose to reveal his truth, revelations, and glory.

Mountains are the sites where the divine will is revealed (Gen. 22:1-18; Ezek. 40-46; Matt. 5, 17, 24, 28:16-20). God's covenants, promises, and revelations are intimately connected with mountains. God's prophets, holy angels, and his chosen people are connected to mountains. The attributes of God are associated with mountains. God is holy and righteous. The righteousness of God is associated with mountains (Ps. 36:6). Mountains are called holy (Ps. 48:1; Jer. 31:23). The steadfastness of God is associated with mountains (Ps. 11:1, 90:2, 125:2). Mountains are symbolic of God's strength (Ps. 65:5-13). The people worship the Lord on a mountain (Ezek. 20:40).

God speaks and gives commandments on mountains (Exod. 3, 19:2-25, 24:12, 31; Num. 20:22-29; 1 Kings 18; Ne. 9:13-14; Matt. 17). God's judgment on the wicked and rebellious is associated with mountains (Gen. 7:20-23; 1 Kings 18:16-40; Isa. 13:2-22, 17:13, 25:7, 30; Jer. 13:126, 51:25; Ezek. 17:23, 32:5-6, 33:28, 38, 39; Joel 2:1-20; Hag. 1:11; Matt. 24; Rev. 17). The blessings of God are connected with mountains (Isa. 11:9, 25:6, 30:29, 42:11, 44:23, 56:7; Jer. 31:5; Ezek. 20:40, 34:13-14, 36, 37; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13; Zech. 8:3).

The passages show how important mountains are in the Bible. Christ's kingdom is described as a stone that becomes a mountain and covers the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). This glorious kingdom will crush the kingdoms controlled by earthly rulers under the influence of satanic principalities. In the presentation of the Mystery Kingdom, Jesus reveals the power and authority of heaven on seven places called a mountain. First and foremost, the mountains in the Bible are connected to spiritual authority and power.

Many interpreters of Revelation 17 do not believe the Bible is sufficient to understand this very significant prophetic chapter. Those who do not believe the seven mountains are found in the Bible look to the words of men. Supposedly, without the words of ancient Romans, Christians would not be able to interpret the seven mountains.⁵⁶ There are those who see the fallacy of equating the seven mountains and seven kings to the hills of Rome and seven emperors of Rome. However, some of these people do not believe the seven mountains are real mountains. They believe the mountains and kings represent successive empires who rule over Israel, or they refer to the empires and their kings. Others believe the seven mountains are the Seven Hills of Rome, but they recognize that the seven kings refer to successive empires in history.

In his book *The Apocalypse*, Seiss writes, "A mountain or prominent elevation (mount) on the surface of the earth is one of the common scriptural images or representatives of a kingdom, regal dominion, empire, or established authority."⁵⁷ Without any doubt, a mountain in the Bible symbolizes a kingdom under the control of a spiritual power. The problem arises when one infers that in the Bible the mountain is commonly used symbolically of the kingdoms under the rule and authority of earthly rulers.

There are five hundred and thirty-six instances where the words mount, mounts, and mountains are used in the Bible.⁵⁸ There are many passages in the Bible where the mountains are more commonly associated with the sanctuary and presence of God. They are more commonly associated with spiritual revelations and spiritual power, and not the

mere kingdoms of man. First and foremost, the mountain symbolizes spiritual rule and authority. It is a mistake to extrapolate that a mountain in the Bible commonly refers to a kingdom under the rule of an earthly king.

In ancient times, the mountain was believed to be the dwelling place of the gods and the site of spiritual revelation and enlightenment. The mountain was believed to be the connecting link between the gods and men and between the spiritual and physical realms. The capital city was seen to be symbolic of a cosmic mountain. The cosmic mountain was the place where the gods ruled through their earthly representatives. The mountain did not symbolize an earthly kingdom under the rule of an earthly king. The symbol of the mountain was used to refer to the rule and authority of a spiritual power. The king was viewed as the earthly agent of a spiritual power. The mistake that some make when interpreting the seven mountains and seven kings is to apply these symbols merely to earthly kingdoms and earthly rulers.

The book of Revelation is about two spiritual kingdoms in conflict. This book also discloses there is no doubt about the outcome of this conflict. Satan is a created being who can in no way, shape, or form ever be compared to the Lord. God is and has always been the sovereign ruler over the earth and all principalities. He is on his throne on the Mount of Congregation. He puts kings on their throne, and he is the one who removes them.

The rule of every earthly kingdom has a spiritual foundation. The Bible reveals that behind the scenes of history, there is an ongoing conflict between holy and evil angels. This conflict involves the kingdoms of the world, but Israel is at the epicenter. If the mountain in the Bible symbolizes spiritual rule, then God's kingdom and the kingdom of Satan should be associated with mountains. Likewise, the earthly and spiritual agents of both God's kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness should be associated with mountains. This is what we do find in the Bible.

We follow the First Mention Principle of biblical interpretation. It is

the belief that the meaning of a word or interpretation of a subject in a passage of Scripture can be enlightened by understanding the meaning the first time it is found in the Bible. The original meaning concerning a thing mentioned in Scripture carries that same meaning throughout its use in the Bible.⁵⁹ To know the biblical meaning of the mountain symbol, we must see how it is first used and how it is subsequently used throughout the Bible.

The world became so evil that God caused a great flood that destroyed every person except Noah, his family, and every creature except the animals that he took on the ark. After the water had risen to cover the mountains, all life not within the ark was destroyed (Gen. 7:20-23). The first mention of a mountain is connected to the divine judgment against the rebellious of the world. We are told that the ark came to rest “upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen. 8:4). The people on the ark were kept safe until the water receded for them to go on dry land. The mountain is also associated with the salvation of people obedient to God. This duality occurs with mountains throughout the Bible.

The first rebellion against God was associated with a mountain. Satan desired to place himself above God. The created wanted to usurp the power and authority of the Creator. To be like God, he had reasoned he must do something. He had to ascend to the utmost heights of the sacred mountain, for this was where God ruled. Isaiah 14:13-14 reveals Satan’s plan of rebellion, “For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Satan knew the sacred mountain of God was the site of God’s throne. Satan knew the mountain was the site of ruling authority, but it was a spiritual kingdom in view rather than an earthly kingdom.

The Bible tells us that Satan, under the title of the king of Tyrus, was cast as profane from the holy mount. When Satan was cast down for his sin and rebellion, he lost his position of honor. In Ezekiel 28:16 God declares, “By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the

midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God.”

Satan lost his position and authority in God’s kingdom because of his rebellion. This loss of authority is linked to his disgraceful removal from the mount of God. One can perceive why this was the case because the mountain is symbolic of spiritual authority. With the fall of Adam, Satan for a time gained authority over this world. It was not by chance that Satan offers Jesus the kingdoms of the world from a very high mountain. This offer by Satan from a very high mountain in Israel was a blasphemous affront to God and his Son.

When Jesus Christ returns, the rule over the earth will go forth from the mounts of Israel. Satan has sought to rule over the same mountains. The seven mountains do point to a location, and that location is in Israel. There is much spiritual symbolism associated with the mountains in the Bible. When Jesus teaches about the kingdom and its citizens, the setting is on a mountain in Matthew. Likewise, when he announces his dominion over all in heaven and in earth, the setting is on a mountain in Israel and the seventh mountain in Matthew, thereby demonstrating his dominion and power are perfect and complete.

From the time the covering Cherub became Satan, there has been a great spiritual conflict. The mountains in the Bible are key sites where this conflict is carried out. Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives. This mountain was called the Mount of Corruption. It has witnessed centuries of blasphemies and desecration. The splitting of the Mount of Olives signifies the enactment of judgment against Satan and all evildoers. It also signifies the protection and salvation of the righteous. When this mountain splits into, a valley is created. The people of Israel will flee through this valley. What was an obstacle is made a way of escape. The servants of God will face many obstacles in the last days. Behind these obstacles are the evil spiritual powers of this world. The Lord will come in power and glory with all the holy ones to end the rule of evil and to begin his righteous rule over all the earth.

It is not surprising that the great conflict between two spiritual

kingdoms at the end of this age would be at a site described as a mountain. All those who oppose God will gather at the end of this age to fight against Jesus Christ and the heavenly armies. The defeat of the enemies of God is at a place called *Armageddon* (*harmagedon*). The Hebrew word *har* means a mountain. Satan's final rebellion will come at the end of Christ's millennial reign. This final rebellion brings the enactment of eternal judgment on Satan and those on the earth who opposed God and his people.

The last mention of a mountain in the Bible is in Revelation 21:10. From a high mountain, John witnesses the holy city of New Jerusalem descending to earth. This will be the eternal site of the throne of God. The last mention of a mountain in the Bible points to the eternal rest of God's people. Rather than referring to world kingdoms, the mountain is associated with spiritual power, divine judgment, and the salvation of the righteous.

The first mystery in Revelation concerns two groups of sevens, and they do not represent the same thing. The seven candlesticks represent seven churches, and the seven stars represent seven holy angels. They represent the earthly and the spiritual. We should likewise believe the seven mountains and seven kings would symbolize both the earthly and the spiritual.

The people of ancient Babylon worshiped many false gods. Most concentrate on Baal, but some of the earliest pagan gods of Babylon were assimilated from the Sumerians. The chief god of the Sumerians was called An. His son was Enil and had the title of the "god of heaven and earth." Enil was associated with a great temple, which was called the "mountain house." This great temple was believed to have been built by Enil. This temple (mountain) was believed to be the pathway of communication between earth and heaven. Enil was also called "a great mountain." An ancient hymn reads, "Without the authority of the 'great mountain' Enil, no city could be built, no king could be raised to office, no lord created."⁶⁰

Ancient men realized the mountains symbolized more than earthly

kingdoms or elevated landforms. They also realized that a king did not rule alone. They understood there was a spiritual foundation for the rule of all kingdoms. They understood the real hierarchy of rule over the kingdoms of the world included both physical and spiritual beings. Modern men focus on earthly rulers and earthly realms. They fail to see that the symbolic meaning of the mountains and kings point to the relationship of spiritual beings and earthly rulers that reign over the kingdoms of the world.

The mountain was the site where God met with his chosen representatives. We see this is also true with other religions in different parts of the world. The Babylonians believed the gods would meet their kings on the mountains. The gods of the Hindus, Greeks, and Persians were believed to be associated with mountains. Ancient cultures believed spiritual principalities and spiritual authority were related to the mountains. Semitic cultures also believed mountains were the connecting link between heaven and earth and between the gods and men.

There is a problem with an interpretation that only applies an earthly application to the symbols that describe the heads of the beast. The beast points to the source of evil rule, which is Satan. There is much truth revealed concerning the mountain symbol in the Bible. Incredibly, many believe the seven mountains of Revelation 17 merely represent seven hills of one empire or the kingdoms of men. Revelation is above all concerned with the consummation of the conflict between two spiritual realms. An interpretation that involves only an earthly application does not depict the hierarchy of evil rule that we know exists. The symbol of the mountain does have a spiritual application in the Bible. The mountain points to spiritual rule and the spiritual agents who carry out this rule.

The motif of the mountain of God is revealed throughout the Bible.⁶¹ The mountain is the place where God dwells and the place where God rules. Exodus 15:17 reads, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place O Lord, which

thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord which thy hands have established.”

The Lord met with Moses and the chosen representatives of Israel on a mountain. One can understand why this was the case. The symbol of the mountain points to spiritual rule and authority and to the representatives of God who carry out the will of God. In Exodus 19:3, God called to Moses from out of the mountain. “And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.” The trumpet got louder farther up the mountain, for God was on top of the mountain. Mount Sinai was the site where God came down to the top of the mountain to meet with his people, and it is the site of the birth of the nation of Israel (Exod. 19). This mountain is associated with the awesome power and presence of God (Exod. 20:18).

The Lord demonstrated on Mount Carmel that he was the one true God and that Elijah was his chosen prophet. God showed with this mountain event that the false gods of the pagans had no power. In 2 Kings 6:17, Elisha prayed, “Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man. He saw and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.” The angelic army was encamped on the mountain. This site is associated with heavenly power. It was also on a mountain that the second Adam was victorious over Satan. God chose and tested his servants on the mountains and revealed his power and glory on the mountains. The symbol of the mountain is associated with the will, rule, and plan of God.

Psalms 78:54 reads, “And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, even to this mountain, which his right hand had purchased.” “And it will come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the tops of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it” (Isa. 2:2). In this passage, the Lord is ruling the earth from his holy mount. “And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of

the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord for Jerusalem” (Isa. 2:3). God’s rule over the earth is associated with a mountain in Israel. Should we not believe that the seven mountains, which are related to the rule of all the kingdoms of the earth, would also be found in Israel?

Mountains are also symbolic of obstacles facing Christians. We are naive if we do not perceive that behind all obstructions facing Christians who carry out the work of the Lord, there are evil principalities. Paul stated that our real enemies are the evil spiritual powers and principalities of the kingdom of darkness. We should discern, as many ancient men did, that behind the wicked rulers of this world, there are evil spiritual powers. Wicked kings and rulers are the earthly representatives of Satan.

Zechariah reveals that Zerubbabel was given the task to build the temple of God. He faced much opposition, but those who opposed him were merely the physical agents of the spiritual forces of evil. Zechariah 4:7 reads, “What are you O mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel, you will become level ground.” The mountain before Zerubbabel was not an actual mountain. It symbolized the evil forces opposed to the servant of God who is doing the work and will of God. The name Satan comes from a Hebrew verb meaning to oppose or obstruct.⁶² We are told the mountain opposing Zerubbabel will become level ground. God will defeat and punish all powers and principalities that seek to oppose his will and plan for his people.

The Lord tests Abraham on a mountain. God reveals that he would provide the only acceptable sacrifice for sin on a mountain. Mount Sinai was the place where God gave the law and showed his awesome power to Israel. Moses viewed the Promised Land from a mountain. The Lord demonstrated he was the one true God through his prophet Elijah on Mount Carmel. Ezekiel’s vision of the restored temple and land was given to him on a very high mountain. Why are mountains so prominent in God’s dealing with his people? Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world on a mountain. Jesus prayed all night on a mountain

before choosing his disciples. Christ proclaimed the kingdom of heaven with authority on the heights of Israel. Jesus began the revelation of the end times on a mountain in Matthew. The commission of the Church was given on a mountain. Why did these events take place on these chosen sites?

Why does the Holy Spirit refer to seven places in Matthew as a mount or mountain? Why was Jesus transfigured on a mountain? Why did Jesus Christ ascend to heaven from a mount, and why will it be to a mount that he will return to earth? Why is the kingdom of Christ referred to as a great mountain that will cover the whole earth? Why was John on a high mountain when he sees the great city of New Jerusalem descending to earth? Why is the eternal kingdom of God described as his holy mountain (Isa. 65:24-25, 66:20)?

If the answers to the above questions are sought in the Bible, we do not believe men would say the mountain is commonly used in the Bible to symbolize earthly kingdoms under the rule of man. The biblical symbol of the mountain is associated with the manifestation of God's sovereign will and rule. God rules from the holy mount. By his sovereign will, God saved Noah and brought the ark to rest on a mountain. He calls Moses from a mountain and covenants with Israel on a mountain. He instructs that the temple be built on a mountain.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd on the mountains of Israel. He feeds, heals, and teaches. He provides food for the body and the soul. God had stated, "My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. I will feed them in good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock and cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 34:14-15). It was through Jesus, on the mountains of Israel, that this Scripture was, in part, fulfilled. The complete fulfillment will take place when Jesus returns to reign over the earth. The term shepherd

has a broader biblical meaning. It can also refer to ruling and governing. This rule and governing are done with compassion and love.⁶³

God is called by the names *Elohim*, *El-Shaddai*, and *El Elyon*. The word *El* is translated as *mighty*, *strong*, and *prominent*. All these adjectives can also apply to a mountain. The Canaanites referred to their gods by the term *El* and believed they were associated with mountains. The word *El* is also associated with the holy angels, who help administer the kingdom of God. Two holy angels named in the Bible are Micha-*el* and Gabri-*el*. There are at least two hundred and fifty instances in the Bible where *El* is used to refer to God and is used primarily to refer to the power of God. When God is called *El*, it points to his creative power, omnipotence, and his sovereign ruling authority.

The name *El-Shaddai* means the almighty one and the God who is able to provide.⁶⁴ Bible scholars admit the original meaning of the name has not yet been discovered. Some believe the probable origin of the name *Shaddai* comes from the word related to the Akkadian word *sadu* (mountain). If their assumption is correct, then *El-Shaddai* can be translated as *God of the mountain(s)*.⁶⁵

El Elyon means the *Most High God* (Gen. 14:8). Height symbolizes power and position. *Elyon* means an elevation, which is high and supreme. When the Bible revealed that Satan desired to ascend to the mount of God to be like the *Most High*, the name *El Elyon* was used.⁶⁶ It also applies to Jesus Christ, for we are told in Luke 1:35 that Christ is the Son of the Highest. The second chapter of Daniel compares Christ's kingdom to a stone that becomes a great mountain.

The apostles were the foundation of the early Church and the chosen earthly representatives of Jesus Christ. Christ commissioned the Church with the authority to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world. Jesus sends the disciples into the world to teach and to baptize. Since the mountain symbolizes spiritual rule and authority, one can understand why the commissioning of Jesus's disciples takes place on a mountain (Matt. 28:16-20). The mountain is the fitting place where those who are chosen to carry out the will of God receive divine authority.

The mountains represent things that are ancient and everlasting in Deuteronomy, Job, and Habakkuk. God met his people at Sinai and on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The top of the mountain was symbolic of spiritual rule and dominion. The power of God is manifested on mountains in many instances throughout the Bible. Some write about the different mountain scenes in the Bible, but they neglect the importance of the biblical symbolism associated with the mountain. This is hard to explain, considering the importance of mountains in the history of Israel, God's revelations, and the proclamation of the kingdom of God by the very Son of God. God rules from the holy mount. Many of the mountain scenes in the Bible point to God effecting his will and rule across the ages through his people, his holy angels, and his Son Jesus Christ.

God is the sovereign ruler over all creation. All power and authority emanate from him. God speaks to Moses from a burning bush on Mount Horeb and commands him to lead the tribes of Israel out of Egypt. He commands Moses and Israel on Mount Sinai. On the Mount of Transfiguration, he commands the disciples to listen to his Son, therefore, revealing that Jesus exercises the authority of heaven. Mountains are the places where the glory, power, commandments, and the voice of God are revealed.

We must understand the unifying theme of the mountain symbol. Mountains in the Bible are the places where God chooses by divine election, tests his earthly representatives, and protects his people. Mountains are the places where God instructs, chastises, and defeats his enemies. The mountains are the places where he uniquely manifests his authority, power, and will. Without question, the mountains are symbolic of spiritual authority and rule! That is why the covenants, promises, laws, blessings, revelations, and judgments of God are associated with mountains. That is why the prophets, holy angels, and the chosen people of God are associated with mountains.

The book of Revelation is a book of consummations. The number seven symbolizes completeness. The seven mountains of Revelation 17

must be related to the truth about the end of evil on the earth and the inauguration of the righteous and glorious reign of King Jesus. The members of the early Church were mostly Jewish. Some held the belief that the seven mountains referred to seven millennia. They believed the seven mountains pointed to the length of world history and the consummation of the plan of God for the complete redemption of the earth.⁶⁷ They understood the tremendous spiritual conflict throughout the ages will culminate with the judgment of the wicked and the reign of Jesus. They believed the seven mountains were related to this cosmic conflict. They did not view Revelation as depicting Israel's conflict with Rome in the first century. They understood the seven mountains were associated with the great spiritual battle throughout the ages that will culminate with the judgment of the wicked and the rule and reign of Jesus.

The distinct group of seven mountains in Matthew is associated with world history, biblical truth, the manifestation of God's plan for the rule of the earth, and the judgment of the wicked. The seven mountains and seven kings symbolize satanic rule across the span of history over the people of God and the mountains of God. This rule is the antithesis of the rule God chose for righteous Israel and the world.

The cloud of glory covered the tabernacle of Moses when it was completed (Exod. 40:35) and the Cherubim associated with the glory of God were above the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies (Heb. 9:5).⁶⁸ Mount Zion alludes to the heavenly Mount. The mount of God motif is seen in the mountain events in Jesus's ministry. We see this with the Mount of Transfiguration and the Mount of Olives. These mountains were both associated with the Glory-cloud manifestation of God, and spiritual beings thus identifying these mounts with the heavenly Mount.⁶⁹ Peter refers to the Mount of Transfiguration as "the holy mountain" (2 Pet. 1:17,18). The desecrations of the temple and the mountains of Israel through pagan worship and the control of these mountains by evil empires are evidence of great blasphemy.

The Shekinah glory had left the temple hundreds of years before and hovered over the Mount of Olives. The glory of God departed due to

the great apostasy and desecration being carried out upon the Temple Mount. The same glory radiates from Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Matthew 24:30 tells us about the “Son of Man” coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory at the end of this age to crush the kingdoms under the rule of evil men and evil principalities.

The mysteries of God are associated with the councils of God and the holy mount. Jesus, on seven mountains in Matthew, points to the very throne of heaven and the holy mount of God. The mountains are the fitting places where the dominion and power of God’s kingdom are revealed to be triumphant over the forces of evil. God is the sovereign ruler over all creation. He is on his throne on the holy mount, and he has given his Son all power and authority.

4



The Biblical Meaning of the Word “Mystery”

During the time the New Testament was being written, the Greek language was dominant throughout the known world. Some believe that the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic and later translated into Greek. The Greek word *mysterion* is translated as mystery in the King James Version of the Bible. There is always a chance of not expressing the true meaning of a word when translating it into a different language. Even the meaning of words in the same language can change over time.

To correctly interpret Revelation 17, we must understand the biblical meaning of the word “mystery.” Some misconceptions about this word used in the Bible and especially in Revelation have led to some erroneous interpretations. The first misconception is that the Greek word *mysterion* has the same meaning as the English word “mystery.” The English word “mystery” can mean something not understood or beyond

understanding.⁷⁰ We cannot apply this definition of the word “mystery” in the English language in our interpretation of the Bible.⁷¹ A biblical mystery is not something that is beyond understanding. A biblical mystery is something that has been kept silent or secret until God chooses the time to reveal it. Once the mystery is revealed, all can understand it. The mystery is made known by the Scriptures of the prophets. The truth had been in the Scriptures all along but was veiled until by the will of God it is made known to all.⁷² The word “mystery” in the Bible does not refer to a secret that can be known by the wisdom of man. Throughout the Bible, the word “mystery” points to a divine secret revealed by God.

The second misconception is that Daniel, Paul, and other biblical writers borrowed their concept of mystery from pagan mystery religions. Some believe the fact that the word “mystery” is associated with Babylon is because the great harlot is the revival of an ancient mystery religion. Some interpretations of Revelation 17 begin with a lengthy dissertation about the ancient mystery religions. The assertion that the word *mysterion* is used in connection with the mystery religions of pagan cultures in the Bible has no support.⁷³ Many interpretations of the seventeenth chapter are pagan-centered rather than Bible-centered. Too often, the focus is on the beliefs and words of men rather than biblical truth. The focus is on the meaning applied by pagans to the word “mystery” rather than the biblical meaning of this word.

Mysterion is translated at least twenty-two times as mystery and five times as mysteries in the New Testament.⁷⁴ The word “mystery” is found last in the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. How can we know its meaning? We need to understand its meaning the first time it is used and its meaning throughout the Bible. There are two words for mystery (*sod*-Hebrew and *raz*-Aramaic) found in the Old Testament. The word *sod* refers to a council or assembly. In the Old Testament, it is used to refer to the Councils of Heaven. This word also refers to secrets. *Raz* is translated as *mysterion* in the Greek Septuagint.⁷⁵ We need to look to the Old Testament use of mystery and to the apostle Paul to learn the biblical purpose of the word “mystery” in the New Testament.

Did the apostles Paul and John look to pagans for the foundation of their beliefs concerning the mysteries in the New Testament? Paul was the chief Hebrew among the Hebrews. The great Jewish teacher Gamaliel, an Orthodox Jew, was Paul's teacher. The Jews looked to the Scriptures for understanding. In Ephesians, Paul writes about the mystery of the Church. He tells us the source of the knowledge of this mystery. Paul said the mystery was revealed to the apostles and prophets by the Holy Spirit. "And when it was uncovered, it was seen to have been in the Scriptures of the Prophets and shadowed until the appointed time."⁷⁶

When the Lord veils a secret for a time, he does so in plain sight. Paul uses the word "mystery" many times. Some believe that when Paul uses this word, he is referring to the mystery cults of ancient Babylon. They apply the same meaning to the mystery in Revelation 17, although they do not offer any biblical passage to support their claim. Some make an association between mystery and the sacraments of the Catholic Church without any biblical foundation.

Over the last century, critics of Christianity have claimed many of the teachings in the New Testament could be traced to the mystery religions and Greek religious thought at the time of Christ. Some believe the Gnostic mythological ideas influenced Paul's use of wisdom and knowledge. There is no evidence from the first century for this assertion. "There are no relevant Gnostic texts from the second and third centuries that are clearly independent of Pauline or other Christian writings."⁷⁷

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has demonstrated the fallacy of the Bible critics. The Jewish community at Qumran used many synonyms for wisdom and knowledge. "The object of the knowledge or insight or wisdom is usually God's truth, His mysteries, His plan of salvation."⁷⁸ In 1 Corinthians, Paul contrasts the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God. The source for Paul's teaching about wisdom and knowledge was the Old Testament. It is also clear that John looked to the Word and Wisdom of God to know the truth of God.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the word "mystery" is related to God's providence as it affects angels, men, and the future of Israel. This is what we

do see in the book of Daniel. The first mystery revealed in Daniel as the last mystery in Revelation concerns the rule over Israel by successive kingdoms. Paul was certainly aware of the Hebrew concept of mystery revealed in the Old Testament and Hebrew writings. The translators of the postexilic books found in the LXX translation used *mysterion* with words such as *krypta* and *apokrypha* which are synonyms for mystery and secrets.⁷⁹

The (*raz-mysterion* in the Septuagint) passages of the second chapter of Daniel have frequently been considered as the foundation for Paul's use of mystery.⁸⁰ The majority of the members of the early Church were Jewish. Christianity did not borrow its concept of mystery from the pagans or the Qumran community. The source for both Christianity and the Qumran community was the Old Testament. Judaism is the source of Paul's use of *mysterion*.

In the book, *The Semitic Background of the Term Mystery in the New Testament*, Brown contends the New Testament usage of the term mystery was influenced by a Semitic concept of mystery revealed in the Old Testament. He believes we must trace the idea of "mystery" in its historical development and through a variety of terms.⁸¹ Carson also asserts *mysterion* is not associated with the mystery religions. Its meaning is traced to a Semitic origin.⁸²

Brown notes that there have been many scholars who have shown interest in the mystery religions and Paul's use of mystery. He also acknowledges there has never been a complete study about the "background idea of mystery in pre-Christian Judaism."⁸³ While Brown concentrates on the Old Testament, he also attempts to understand the Hebrew concept of mystery by looking at the Qumran writings and extra-biblical books.

Brown admits the scope of his work was limited. Even so, he was able to demonstrate from the Old Testament and Semitic writings that there were many sources "in thought and word" for just about every concept and use of the word "mystery" in the New Testament. This conclusion is made even though we have only a small portion of the

Jewish literature that was available to Paul and John. Brown concludes there was a deep and varied “concept of divine mysteries” in the Old Testament and Semitic writings. He asserts that “Paul and all the other New Testament writers were more than able to write everything they did write concerning the mysteries in the New Testament without ever having any acquaintance with the mystery religions of the pagans.” Brown demonstrates there is ample evidence that the biblical concept of mystery was thoroughly ingrained in the Jewish mind.⁸⁴

Christ is at the center of the mystery in Ephesians. Christ will put an end to the worship of false gods, which were the focus of the pagan mystery religions. The mystery associated with the pagan mystery religions is antithetical to the concept of mystery found in Ephesians and Colossians.⁸⁵ It is obvious Paul was not referring to the pagan mystery religions when he wrote about the mysteries in the Bible.

The first time the word for mystery is found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint); it is in the second chapter of Daniel. This mystery concerns the rise and fall of successive empires that would rule over Israel until King Jesus returns to put an end to evil rule. The book of Daniel reveals that there are both holy and evil angels associated with these kings/kingdoms. In Daniel, the power of God and his sovereignty are contrasted with the power and rule of world kingdoms.⁸⁶ All power and dominion are given to “one like the Son of man.”

The word “mystery” is closely associated with the word “apocalypse.” This word refers to something unveiled or revealed. It refers to something previously not understood or known, but at the time of the Lord’s choosing, it is revealed to his people. The book of Revelation is the revelation (apocalypse) of Jesus Christ. The mysteries revealed in the New Testament concern God’s eternal plan for the redemption of man through his Son, Jesus Christ, and the enactment of eternal judgment on all evil. “But in the mysteries of his intelligence and his glorious wisdom, God has appointed an end for the existence of evil.”⁸⁷ The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew and the book of Revelation reveal the

coming great tribulation and the return of the King of Kings to enact judgment on all evildoers.

A guiding principle for the biblical interpretation of a symbol or word is to see how it is first used in the Bible and how it is subsequently used. *Mysterion* is used many times in the New Testament. We should have a good grasp of the meaning of this word by the time we get to the last book of the Bible. *Mysterion* is always used to refer to the truth revealed by God. It is used to refer to God's wisdom, will, and the secrets of God's kingdom. It is used about the Church, the body of Christ, composed of Gentiles and Jews. The word "mystery" is found in connection with the blindness of Israel and the rejection of the kingdom. It is also used concerning the mystery of lawlessness. Paul spoke about the mystery of iniquity and revealed this is the antithesis to the mystery of Godliness (2 Thess. 2:7; Tim 3:16). These mysteries reveal the great contrast between the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom.

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7). The mystery Paul was speaking about is revealed in 1 Cor. 2:2, "For I determine not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Paul believed Jesus Christ and his sacrificial death for the sins of man revealed the wisdom of God. The redemption of man and the world was something kept secret until the time of God's choosing. The mystery mentioned in Romans 16:25 was associated with Jesus's ministry and teaching. Paul considered Jesus's ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection as the revelation of God's mysterious plan that had been hidden. Paul associates mystery with Jesus Christ in the "captivity epistles."⁸⁸

To understand the last mystery in the Bible associated with seven mountains and kingdom rule, we must look to Jesus. Mystery Babylon should be seen in contrast to the Mystery Kingdom. Throughout Matthew and especially in the parables, those who belong to God's kingdom, and those who belong to Satan and the world are contrasted. The central truth about the mysteries in the New Testament is that Jesus

Christ is at the center of God's plan for the redemption of man. Jesus will return to enact judgment on all evil, and he will inaugurate the righteous kingdom over all the earth.

There is a tale of two cities in Revelation. Babylon, the Great is the antithesis of New Jerusalem. New Jerusalem's foundation is the kingdom of God. Babylon's foundation is a beast with seven heads. In the New Testament, the mystery and wisdom of God are associated with the Son of God. Mystery in the Epistles is used to reveal Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God's will and God's love. Paul explained and expounded on the mysteries in the Bible. The source of this knowledge was not the words of men or pagan religions. The source was the Holy Scriptures and revelations from God. The word "mystery" is used in Matthew 13 and Revelation 17. It does not refer to the mystery cults in Matthew 13. Likewise, this word does not refer to pagan religions in Revelation 17.

The word "mystery" in Revelation first appears in Revelation 1:20. In this passage, Jesus reveals a mystery about two groups of sevens. These are the seven stars and seven candlesticks. These symbols point to the spiritual and the earthly. The first group stands for the seven angels of the Lord. The second group stands for the people of God (seven churches in Asia Minor). The last mystery in the Bible also concerns two groups of sevens. It is a false assumption that the word "mystery" in Revelation 17 is a reference to the religion of ancient Babylon because it is associated with the symbolic name of Babylon. Those who make this assumption ignore the meaning of the word "mystery" throughout the New Testament, and the synonyms for mystery found in the Old Testament.

"There is ample background of the idea of mystery in the Old Testament and Jewish literature. While the term enters upon a new career in the New Testament, it is not altogether novel, but further develops the idea in Daniel."⁸⁹ In many Jewish writings, the use of the word mystery is related to God's will and revelation concerning man. In Hebrew thought, wisdom is depicted as "an agent of God in revealing mysteries."⁹⁰ Jesus is

the Word and Wisdom of God. John tells us the revelation he received on the Isle of Patmos was the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The use of mystery in Revelation 10 is used to refer to the “mysteries of God.” These mysteries concern the judgment of the evil kingdoms of this world and the climax of evil rule. “Here we have a different use of mystery, no longer a symbol, but the mysterious will of God for the end of time.” Swete believes the mystery of God in Rev. 10 points to the “whole purpose of God in the evolution of human history.”⁹¹ The word mystery here refers to the end of satanic rule over all kingdoms in conjunction with the reign of Jesus Christ over the earth.

John wrote the book of Revelation. The first to receive this revelation were churches whose members were still mostly Jewish believers. Many do not apply the concept of mystery held by the Jews in the Old Testament when interpreting the word “mystery” in Revelation. Of course, we must know the meaning of the Greek words so we can correctly interpret the Bible. The danger lies in the misapplication of the intended meaning.

Because the word for mystery is in Greek, many choose to apply the understanding of mysteries based on its usage by the pagan Greeks about pagan religions. Are we to apply this same method of interpretation to every Greek word used in the New Testament? If we did, it would completely pervert the truth of the Bible. Those who interpret the word “mystery” in Revelation 17 based on the application of pagan Greeks have predetermined the identity of Mystery Babylon. They ignore the proper principles of biblical interpretation and force upon the word “mystery” used in the Bible an unscriptural application.

The Greek concept of God was antithetical to the beliefs held by the prophets and apostles. Most Greeks believed in many gods. Just in case they left one out, they erected a temple to the unknown god. Paul said he was proclaiming the truth about the unknown God. The one true God was unknown to them, for he can only be known through the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ. It is wrong to interpret *mysterion* as a reference to a pagan religion based on its application by the Greeks concerning

their pagan beliefs. No Christian would interpret the Greek words for wisdom and God in the Bible based on their pagan applications.

A large portion of the second chapter of Daniel was written in Chaldee. The entire section from the fourth verse of the second chapter to the end of the seventh chapter is in Chaldee. For centuries, many have wondered why this is the case. These passages do serve to demonstrate the fallacy that the last time the word “mystery” appears in the Bible it refers to a pagan religion.

If *mysterion* refers to the mystical religions of ancient Babylon in Revelation 17, then surely the Babylonian word for mystery in Daniel likewise should refer to a pagan religion. The Chaldee word for mystery (*raz*) is found in the Chaldee portion of Daniel. This word is associated with the Babylonian king and empire. It does not refer to a mystery religion. The word relates to prophetic truth revealed by God to his servant Daniel about empires that rule over the nation and mountains of God. The Chaldee word *raz* is translated as *mysterion* in the Septuagint and conveys the meaning of the Hebrew word *sod*. The translators of the LXX were very careful in their use of the word *mysterion* because of the fear some people would associate it with the mystery religions.⁹² In light of the many interpretations of Mystery Babylon, their fears seem well justified.

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants” (Amos 3:7). Eliphaz, a friend of Job, asks, “Hast thou heard the secret of God? And dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself” (Job 15:8)? The Hebrew word *sod* is in reference to the secret heavenly council where the prophets hear the secrets of God. Brown points out that in Proverbs, Sirach, and the Qumran, secrets, or mysteries are associated with the word *sod*.⁹³ In the second chapter of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has a dream that deeply troubles him. The word “mystery” first appears in the Bible in this chapter and is found eight times. The Aramaic *raz* is used to refer both to the dream, and the truth revealed by the dream. The dream is full of symbols, which are associated with the future of the nation of Israel.⁹⁴

The king ordered the execution of all the magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, and the Chaldeans if they could not reveal the dream and its interpretation. The Chaldeans responded by saying that no man could reveal such a thing, for the knowledge the king sought was beyond human comprehension. Daniel also understood this truth, but he knew who held the answers to the king's questions. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

Daniel, the chosen representative of God, reveals the mystery (*raz*-secret) about the king's dream. Daniel acknowledges his understanding of the dream was by the wisdom and hand of God. The first time the word *mysterion* appears in the Septuagint, it refers to Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The mystery of the dream concerns empires and specifically those empires, which rule over Israel. "Here for the first time *mysterion* has the sense of an eschatological: a veiled announcement of future events predetermined by God, whose unveiling and real meaning is reserved to God alone and the one inspired by his spirit."⁹⁵ The word *raz* in Daniel has to do with the mysteries revealed by God to his servant Daniel about the fate of kings and kingdoms, which rule over Israel in succession. We should also view Mystery Babylon as a mystery revealed by God about the rule over Israel and the kingdoms of the earth.

The mystery in Daniel involved more than the prophetic announcement of the rise and fall of successive empires that rule over Daniel's people and the mountains of God. The book of Daniel reveals there are evil principalities over these empires. It shows that there is a spiritual conflict going on between God's kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. The last time the word "mystery" is used, it concerns a harlot, which sits on a beast with seven heads. The mystery of John's vision also concerns successive empires/kingdoms that rule over Israel. Through Mystery Babylon, God is revealing spiritual truth about the rise and fall of the kingdoms of the world.

Brown sees the revelation of the king's dream by the servant of God correlating to the ancient heavenly councils (*sod*) where the servants of

God hear the plans of God. While this revelation is revealed through symbols and in a dream, the concept of the heavenly *sod* is evident. God's revelations to Daniel are in line with Amos' declaration that God is revealing his sod to his servants the prophets.⁹⁶ We find this same concept of *sod* in Revelation. The revelation John received is from the very throne of heaven. John receives the revelation through the angel of Jesus. God reveals mysteries to his chosen servant, who proclaims the truth to the people.

Paul writes about the Mystery of the Church as the body of Christ. Paul also writes that the Church was planned in the "Councils of Eternity" (*sod*) before the world was created (Rom. 8:29-30; Eph. 1:9-11; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; 1 Cor. 2:7). The mysteries in the New Testament were kept silent until the time of God's choosing. These mysteries were made known to the servants of God through the Spirit of God. Unlike the mystery cults, where just a small select group received the "secrets of the gods," the mysteries of God are for all his people.

Since Jesus Christ is the revelator of the mysteries of God, we should look to him to understand the last mystery. "John takes it for granted that God has given to Jesus Christ a disclosure of crucial significance. All understanding of the will of God is therefore inseparable from the understanding of Christ's work. John thinks of that work in terms of the familiar accounts of the ministry of Jesus, as climaxed in his death."⁹⁷

The meaning of the Hebrew word "*sod*" and the meaning of the root word from which it is taken most aptly depicts the truth about the harlot. Through the seven mountains, we can see the physical location of the great city (Israel). Through the seven mountains, we can also understand the harlot's earthly and spiritual foundations. The harlot sits on seven mountains found in the Bible. Her foundation is the kingdom of Satan and seven evil principalities (Dan.10) that exert satanic control over earthly principalities.

When the word "mystery" appears in the Bible, it refers to a truth that is revealed by God. It does not apply to something that is known by the wisdom of men, nor does it relate to the ancient pagan religions.

The meaning of the word “*sod*” points to divine secrets and the council of God. These secrets concern spiritual authority and the rule over the earth.

Yacadh (yaw-sad) (Strong’s 3245), which means to set, to sit down together, to lay as in a foundation, to take counsel, and to establish is the root word for *sod* (Strong’s 5475).⁹⁸ We need to apply the meaning of the word “*sod*” and the definition of the root word when interpreting Revelation 17. We can conclude that the heavenly council of God is revealing a secret. The secret involves a mystery about the rule over the earth by a great harlot. It involves the identity of the harlot and the theological truths concerning her rule. The harlot’s foundation is on seven mountains and seven kings/kingdoms.

The harlot’s name is inscribed on her head. The beast’s heads contain blasphemous names. We see that the name of the beast is found on the heads of some of his followers. The phrase “holy unto God” was written on the miter of the chief priest. The harlot’s name begins with the word “Mystery.” To make it abundantly clear that the harlot is a divine mystery, God names her “Mystery.”

Some fail to apply the biblical meaning of mystery in their interpretation of the last mystery in the Bible. While we believe Mystery, Babylon the Great is a symbolic name with a hidden meaning, the word mystery means so much more. God is declaring that the harlot is a divine mystery. This mystery cannot be known from history books, Roman poets, or the comparative study of ancient mystery religions. A divine mystery can only be understood by revelation from God. A divine mystery is found in the Word of God, not in the words of men. By this fact alone, it should be clear the harlot does not refer to the city of Rome, the site of the ancient city of Babylon, the ancient kingdom of Babylon or its pagan religion.

Throughout the Bible, a mystery is something to be revealed by God. Those who claim the last mystery in the Bible is something known by the wisdom, and the words of men contradict biblical truth. Those who interpret Mystery Babylon literally when the Word of God is speaking

in a spiritual sense interpret foolishly. The real mystery surrounding the harlot of Revelation 17 involves the spiritual nature of her rule and the people she symbolizes. The word mystery should immediately let us know the harlot and her rule point to spiritual realities that can only be revealed and understood from God's Word.

5



Why the Kingdom Book Reveals the Seven Mountains Where Mystery Babylon Sits

The gospel of Matthew stands as a bridge that connects the Old and New Testaments. It is not surprising that the first Gospel contains many quotations from the Old Testament. Matthew is the link between fulfilled prophecy and prophecy that will be fulfilled in the future.⁹⁹ The last mystery in the Bible found in Revelation is connected to the prophecies in Daniel and Matthew. The prophecies in Daniel, the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and Revelation should be viewed as one body of prophecy.¹⁰⁰ The prophecies in these books deal with the conflict between the kingdom of God and Satan's kingdom. They reveal the victory of God's kingdom over all principalities and the coming judgment against all evil. Since these prophecies deal with the rule over all kingdoms, it should not be surprising that Matthew, the kingdom book, would be critical in understanding them.

In revealing Jesus's proclamation of the kingdom to Israel, the book of Matthew uses the framework of mountains. Kingsbury, Donaldson, and others reveal the importance of the mountain motif in the plot, narrative, and structure of Matthew.¹⁰¹ Mountains are prominent in Matthew for an important reason. Mountains are symbolic of spiritual rule and authority. In this book, Jesus's royal authority is in view and his kingship is revealed.¹⁰² In Matthew, he manifests the power of God. He fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. Matthew presents Jesus as the Son of God. In the end, it proclaims Jesus has been given authority and dominion over all "in heaven and in earth."

The word "kingdom" is used more than fifty-four times in Matthew. The genealogy of Jesus is given to prove that he is the Son of David. The title "Son of David" is found ten times in Matthew, and Jesus is addressed by this title seven times. The title "Son of David" reveals that Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of David, which is an eternal throne.¹⁰³ Matthew is not just interested in providing an account of the life and ministry of Jesus. He is also interested in imparting theological truth. Matthew presents theological symbolism associated with the mountains of Israel and not mere geography.

Most scholars recognize the Jewish character of Matthew. Many view Jesus's life as a midrashic account of the nation of Israel. They see the events associated with Jesus's life in Matthew as mirroring specific events in the history of Israel. They cite the journey of Jesus and his family to Egypt and their return to Israel. This points to the trip by Abraham and his family to Egypt and the exodus of the tribes of Israel under Moses. Both the birth of Jesus and Isaac involved a miracle. The world rejected and despised both Israel and Jesus. There are parallels and contrasts in the temptations of Jesus and Israel in the desert journey. Matthew reveals that Jesus responded to Satan's temptations by quoting Deuteronomy. The passages he quoted dealt with Israel wandering in the desert.¹⁰⁴ We see in all areas where Israel failed; Jesus is victorious.

Some view Jesus's life as the portrayal of Israel's past, but many believe for righteous Israel, Jesus's transfiguration points toward the

glorious future reign of Israel as the “head” of all nations. Israel failed under the law. Israel sinned and rebelled against their Creator and faced the judgment of God. The book of Ezekiel discloses that there is to be a resurrection of Israel (valley of dry bones). There is also to be a regeneration of Israel spiritually as the people of God. Through Jesus Christ, Israel will share in the glory of her victorious King.

The kingship of Jesus Christ is the primary truth presented in the Bible and specifically Matthew. All the Major Prophets and many of the Minor Prophets pointed to Christ’s kingship. There are passages that are distinct to Matthew, and many of them deal with the King and his kingdom. Jesus’s authority is one of the key themes of the Gospels.¹⁰⁵ This authority is recognized on the seven mountains in Matthew.

Moses received the law on Mount Sinai. It is on a mountain that a greater prophet than Moses revealed the true meaning of the law. In the Sermon on the Mount, the people recognized that “Jesus taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:29). In the book of Matthew, we see Jesus’s authority over sickness, demons, nature, sin, and even death. The proclamation of God’s kingdom on the mountains of Israel by the Son of God signaled the coming judgment on all evil.

The early Church was composed mainly of Jewish Christians who were aware that mountains were very prominent in the history of Israel, and the nation’s intimate relationship with God. Donaldson cites themes associated with the mountains of Matthew. They are Christology, ecclesiology, and salvation history.¹⁰⁶ These mountains are also linked with eschatology. Eschatology is Christology because Jesus is the key to understanding end-time events.¹⁰⁷ These themes and a distinct group of seven mountains are threads woven together throughout the book of Matthew.

When Jesus is on the seven mountains of Matthew, we see the allusion to Mount Zion, the place where the Lord abides and rules. Mount Zion is the place where the Lord meets with his people. Jesus meets with the people of Israel to teach, feed, and heal. One of the main features of Zion eschatology and throughout the Second Temple period was

the belief that Israel in the future would be gathered again to the holy mountain of God as the chosen people of God.¹⁰⁸ The recipients of the Gospel of Matthew would have been well aware of the beliefs associated with Zion. What makes the mountains of Matthew holy is the fact that Jesus is there. The promises concerning Zion are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. On these mountains, he is enthroned as Yahweh's chosen king. On these sites, we see the allusion to the throne of God.

In the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, Satan is called the covering Cherub. Many believe that before Satan fell, he had duties associated with the throne of God. He was associated with the Lord's mountain and his special dwelling place. The ark of the covenant had two carved Cherubim on each side with their wings outstretched over the top. The ark represented the presence of the Lord and the throne of heaven. The covering Cherub came to covet the throne of the Lord. The Bible reveals he purposed in his heart to overthrow the rule of God. The covering Cherub rebelled and became Satan. His plan of rebellion involved ascending the holy mount. Satan understood this mountain was directly associated with the throne of God and therefore, the power and authority of heaven.

Satan is a created being who is intelligent and powerful. He has a kingdom that includes a multitude of evil spiritual beings, but he can in no way ever be compared to an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Creator. Christians should be aware of the power and evil designs of the kingdom of darkness, but nowhere in the Bible are we told to fear the evil ones. Satan is a defeated foe who can only do what God allows. He mimics the kingdom of God because it is the only example of ruling perfection he has experienced. He is the enemy of God, and he continually seeks to blaspheme God.

Satan's rebellion failed, and he lost his position of authority in the Lord's kingdom. This lost authority is related to his removal as profane from the holy mount. He would have another plan of rebellion involving the earth and the Lord's new creation. The Lord created Adam and gave him dominion over the earth. Satan planned to usurp the rule and

dominion that the Lord had given to man. Adam sinned, and with his fall, Satan for a time gained authority over this world. Over time the people of the earth became so evil that the Lord sent a great flood to destroy everyone except Noah and his family.

The Lord later chose Abraham and promised to bless his descendants. Abraham exhibited great faith and obedience. Through the descendants of Abraham, God would choose a people and a nation that he would call his own. He promised the people of Israel a special dwelling place. Israel received the law on Mount Sinai. The top of this mount was where God came down to meet with his people, and it is the site of the birth of the nation of Israel (Exod. 19).

Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal were witnesses to the blessings and curses that lay before Israel depending on their obedience to God. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, the Lord promised the people of Israel that if they continued to obey him, they would be “set on high above all the nations of the earth.” He promised that they would be the “head” of all nations. He also warned the people of Israel. If they disobeyed his commandments and followed false gods, kingdoms would rise to rule over them. Many neglect these truths when interpreting the “heads” of the beast.

Mountains are associated with the whole history of Israel and God dealing with his chosen people and nation. Mountains, cities, and kingdoms are emphasized in Matthew and Revelation. The word city (polis) is mentioned eight times in Mark but twenty-six times in Matthew. The words mount and mountain are used sixteen times in Matthew, and this is more than any other book in the New Testament.

Jack Dean Kingsbury, in his book *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* believes God specifically chooses the mountains in Matthew as the places where Jesus is revealed as the Son of God.¹⁰⁹ We believe Kingsbury’s conclusion about the Christology associated with the mountains of Matthew is correct. The mountain is the symbol of spiritual rule and authority, and as the Son of God, Jesus exercises the very authority of God. When he is on the mountains of Matthew, we see the true ark and

temple of God on the mountain of God. These mountains witness the very perfection of spiritual rule by the King of Kings.

After Jesus's baptism with the voice from heaven declaring him to be God's Son, he is led into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. In Matthew 4:8, he is taken up into "an exceeding high mountain" where Satan tempts him as the Son of Man and the Son of God. After this mountain scene, Satan tempts him with the stipulation "if you be the Son of God." His perfect obedience to the Father reveals he is indeed the very Son of God. At his baptism in the Jordan River, a voice from heaven proclaims him as the Son of God. It is right after this declaration that his ministry begins with him going up to the mountain in Matthew 5:1. So, Jesus's ministry in Matthew begins with a mountain and ends with a mountain (Matt. 28:16). The mountains in between reveal his authority and power.

Jesus displays divine wisdom and has intimate knowledge of the Father and his kingdom. The fact he possesses such truth is evidence of his close and intimate relationship with God. In the Sermon on the Mount, "Christ enunciated the laws of His kingdom and spoke with an authority infinitely transcending that of the Jewish leaders; and therefore His posture here is to be regarded as emblematic of the King sitting on His throne, or the Judge on the bench."¹¹⁰

The Mount of Olives is the only mountain named in Matthew. Kingsbury brings out the vital fact that numerous times Matthew refers to a mountain as the place for some activity of Jesus (Matt. 4:8, 5:1, 14:23, 15:29, 17:1, 28:16-20). The theological importance associated with the mountains in Matthew can be understood by the activities that are related to them. Kingsbury writes: "Thus, the mountain is the place of eschatological revelation (Matt. 4:8, 5:1, 15:29, 17:1, 28:16-18) and the solitude and nearness to God (Matt. 14:23); for these reasons, it also underlines the divine authority with which Jesus speaks there and heals" (Matt. 5:1, 7:28-29, 15:29, 28:16-18, also 17:1, 5)."¹¹¹

"The themes of eschatological revelation, of intimate fellowship with God, and of the divine authority are integral to Matthew's portrait of

Jesus as the Son of God.”¹¹² What makes the unidentified mountains so important is the fact that they are associated with the Son of God. Jesus is revealed to be God’s Son by demonstrating the power and authority of the Lord on these mountains. He is presented as the true Messiah of Israel.

On the first place called a mountain by the Holy Spirit, Satan tempts the Son of God (Matt. 4:8). Jesus goes up on the third place called a mountain to pray. Kingsbury points out another important fact. This event falls within the same chapter, where the disciples recognize him as the Son of God (Matt. 14:23-33). On the fifth place called a mountain, he is transfigured, and a voice from a cloud proclaims he is the Son of God (Matt. 17:5). It is the last place called a mountain where we see “the resurrected Christ meeting with the disciples and refers to himself as “the Son of God: in association with the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:16, 19).”¹¹³ Kingsbury believes the events which take place on the mountains in Matthew 5:1 and 15:29 also point to Jesus as God’s Son.¹¹⁴

At the beginning of Jesus’s ministry, it is revealed that he is the Son of God. His ministry is marked by teaching the Word of God and performing miracles of healing. Kingsbury contends that it cannot be accidental that in Matthew 5:1, Jesus goes up on a mountain specifically to teach (Matt. 5:2, 7:28-29) and in Matthew 15:29 to heal (15:30-31). “At the same time, Matthew shows in 16:16-17 that the height of Christian revelation is, in his eyes, that a person is enabled by God to confess Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God (cf. also Matt. 27:54).” The fact that he teaches with authority and performs healing miracles is evidence of his divine nature.¹¹⁵

In Jesus’s ministry, we see a close connection between his teaching about the kingdom and acts such as healing and casting out evil spirits. These acts reveal the power and authority of the kingdom.¹¹⁶ Jesus did not just teach about the kingdom. He demonstrated the power and glory of the kingdom. Kingsbury concludes that Matthew uses the “mountain” to proclaim Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel.¹¹⁷ As

the Son of God, he possesses the very authority of the throne of heaven. These mountains are associated with spiritual rule and dominion.

Mountains and cities are both prominent sites in Matthew. We see the contrast between the reaction of those on the mountains in Matthew and those in the cities. In the cities, Jesus teaches about the kingdom in the form of parables. The cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida witnessed the miracles performed by him and heard his teachings. In these cities, he faces much rejection. Jesus said that if the cities of Tyre and Sidon had heard and witnessed the same things as these cities, they would have already repented. “But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you” (Matt. 11:22). Many accept his authority and teaching on the mountains in Matthew. In the cities, many reject his authority and his message.

The mountains in Matthew are sites where the people come to the feet of Jesus to receive instruction and healing. The healing is not just for the body, but for the soul and spirit as well. Origen viewed the mountains in Matthew as figurative of the Church where the people come to meet with God and to be transformed physically and spiritually.¹¹⁸ To ascend the mountain with Jesus is to leave the earthly realm and to enter the kingdom of God. It is to cross over from the physical to the spiritual.

Throughout history, many have viewed physical healing as figurative of spiritual healing. Many equate the healing of the blind eyes to the opening of our spiritual eyes to the truth of the Father. They associate the healing of the lame with the ability through Jesus to walk in righteousness. The kingdom of God was revealed and manifested in Jesus Christ while he was on earth. Since that time, the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, has chosen to reveal and manifest his kingdom through the Church, the Body of Christ.

Sin brought sickness, pain, and death into the world and separated man from his Creator. Jesus has power over the physical consequences of sin (disease, suffering, and physical death). The remission of sin through the blood of Jesus is the answer to the spiritual consequences of sin (separation from God and spiritual death). Man’s relationship with

his Creator can only be restored through Jesus. The same power revealed in Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration can transform those whose hope and salvation are in him. Some believe the gathering of the people with him on the mountains in Matthew is an allusion to New Jerusalem, the city of God. It is this city that stands as the antithesis to the great harlot.

Others have also noted the importance of mountains in Matthew and the Bible. Wiersbe takes notice of the many mountain scenes in Matthew.¹¹⁹ Conner sees the significance of the mountains in the Bible. He cites the five structures associated with the habitations of God. They are the “Ark of Noah, the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of David, the Temple of Solomon, and the New Jerusalem, the city of God.” He believes the fact that these structures are linked to mountains must relate to important prophetic truth. Mountains are significant in the history of Israel. The mountains are related to God’s revelations to his people.¹²⁰

Some have criticized Kingsbury’s conclusions. They believe that being on a mountain does not imply such theological importance. The critics have not understood the importance of the mountain symbol in the Bible. The mountains in question are not just any mountains. These are God’s mountains. It is not just anyone on the mountain. It is Jesus, the very Son of God. His presence alone is enough to make us look for more than a mere geographical location.

The great acts that take place upon the mountains of Matthew should also draw our close attention. The critics do not consider the multitude of instances where a mountain is related to the awesome power, revelations, and glory of the Lord. The Holy Spirit uses the mountains of Matthew to reveal that Jesus is the Son of God, who manifests the very authority of the throne of heaven. Therefore, these mountains have a close relationship with kingdom rule and authority.

The number seven is associated with covenants. The number seven represents completeness and perfection. Jesus is the perfect revelation of the love, will, and glory of God. It should not be surprising that Jesus’s life, ministry, death, and resurrection are associated with seven

mountains. We can understand why Jesus is on seven distinct mountains in the proclamation of the kingdom. One can see the theological justification for Kingsbury's conclusions. Satan is the father of blasphemy. We can perceive why his attempt to the rule over the earth would involve the control of the seven mountains in Matthew.

The King of Kings does not return to the hills of Rome or the ancient city of Babylon to signal the end of satanic rule over the earth. To enact judgment on all evil, he returns to the sixth mountain of Matthew and splits it into two parts. One-part shifts to the east, while the other shifts toward the west. Through these seven mountains, King Jesus reveals the seven mountains where Mystery Babylon sits.

Mountain One: Satan offers the rule over "all the kingdoms of the world." Jesus is victorious over Satan and his kingdom (Matt. 4:8). This same Satan is depicted as a great red dragon with seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns in Revelation 12.

Mountain Two: The King teaches intimate knowledge about God's kingdom and its righteous citizens (Matt. 5:1). He makes known the heart of the law and not just the letter of the law. Those symbolized by the "great harlot" in Revelation 17 are antithetical to the righteous of God.

Mountain Three: The obedient King prays on a mountain (Matt. 14:23). Jesus, praying alone on this mountain, is the portrait of the High Priest offering incense to the Lord on the Holy Mount. The obedient Lamb of God stands in contrast to the blasphemous beast with seven heads.

Mountain Four: The King manifests the power of heaven on one of the seven mountains of Matthew found in Israel (Matt. 15:29). On this mountain, Jesus exercises spiritual authority and power, thereby proving he is the Messiah.

Mountain Five: The Mount of Transfiguration is where the disciples see the glory of God radiating from Jesus. His transfiguration is a brief glimpse of his future glorious kingdom (Matt. 17:1; 17:9; 17:20).¹²¹ In the future, the judgment proclaimed against all evil kingdoms on the

sixth mountain in Matthew will be enacted. Then we will see the manifestation of his glorious kingdom.

Mountain Six: The Mount of Olives is the site of the King's revelation, betrayal, agony, and ascension. Here, Jesus instructs his disciples about the coming judgment on all evil. It is also the site of his triumphal return to judge the wicked nations and to begin his righteous reign. Jesus ascends to the very throne of God from this mount to sit at the right hand of the Father. He will descend from the very throne of God to this mount to end evil rule. This mountain is associated with the central message of the book of Revelation. It is associated with the reign of the Messiah over the earth and judgment against all evil.

The descent-ascent concept in Ephesians demonstrates the victory and dominion of Jesus over the forces of evil. In Psalm 68, God is depicted as victoriously leading prisoners up to his holy mountain, and this is applied to Jesus Christ in Ephesians. He is victorious over the evil principalities and has ascended to his exalted position in heaven.¹²² The Mount of Olives is the site of both the ascent and descent of Christ. It stands as a witness to Christ's victory over the powers of evil that have controlled this world.

Mountain Seven: From this mountain, the King sends his servants to baptize "all the nations" (Matt. 28:16). This mountain is connected to the Church. It is the Church composed of Gentiles and Jews that will reign with Jesus Christ. The commission given on this mountain continues today and will not end until Jesus returns to rule over all nations. King Jesus proclaims all power "in heaven and in earth" is given to him (Matt. 28:18). The glory of the kingdoms offered on the first mountain in Matthew by Satan is given to Jesus by the Father.

Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom and to manifest its power and glory. The rule exerted by the beast and harlot is the antithesis to the rule that was ordained for righteous Israel and the righteous of the world. The same seven mountains where he revealed the glory and the truth of God, the great harlot sits. These same mountains will witness the

end of all evil rule and the inauguration of the righteous kingdom over the world.

Revelation is a book about kingdom rule. There are many symbols in Revelation, but the throne and the spiritual authority it represents are at the center of this prophetic book.¹²³ There are many references to the throne of God and the One who sits on the throne. This book reveals what is going on in heaven and on earth. It depicts the consummation of the conflict between two spiritual kingdoms and the subjects of those kingdoms. At the center of this conflict is Israel.

Jesus was a teacher of truth and a miracle worker who healed the body and mind. Through him, the lame was restored, and the blind regained their sight. He cast out many demons from afflicted people and raised the dead back to life. These were all acts of love and compassion, but they were also acts of a warrior involved in spiritual warfare. Through these acts, the Messiah demonstrated spiritual dominion.

All these acts performed by Jesus revealed that he exercised the authority of heaven. Every time he cast out a demon or healed some physical infirmity, he was assaulting the kingdom of Satan. The kingdom of Satan is built on lies and deception.¹²⁴ Every time Jesus proclaimed the truth of God; he was crushing the very foundation of Satan's kingdom. This is demonstrated on the seven mountains. Matthew is a book of triumph and dominion of the Lord's chosen King over the forces of evil.

The mountains of Matthew are associated with the whole span of human history, not just the first century. These mountains are connected to all the kingdoms of the world, not only the Roman Empire. Mere geography and history books do not disclose the spiritual source of evil rule and the hierarchy of evil rule over the kingdoms of the world. It can only be understood in contrast to the rule ordained by an omnipotent and sovereign God.

The seven mountains of Matthew are the same seven mountains in Revelation 17. Therefore, one would expect a close association between these books. Revelation reveals that King Jesus will enact judgment against Satan and the evil kingdoms of the world. It is a book that

unveils the prophetic events to take place in the last days. The revelation of Christ about the last days begins on the sixth mountain in Matthew 24. Some refer to this chapter as a mini Revelation.

The words king and kings are used twenty-two times in Matthew and twenty-two times in Revelation. Seven specific mountains are mentioned in Revelation, and there are seven distinct places called a mountain by the Holy Spirit in Matthew. The number seven occurs fifty-four times in Revelation, and the word kingdom is used more than fifty-four times in Matthew. In the book of Revelation, Christ is revealed as the Lamb of God and the Son of God. He is the rightful heir to the throne of David. Matthew 22:2-46 shows that Jesus is the Messiah.

Matthew and Revelation both tell of earthquakes, famine, and wars. The seven woes are very similar to the messages written to the seven churches in Matthew. In Matthew, the glory of God radiates from Jesus on a mountain. On the seven mountains of Matthew, Jesus, the Son of God, demonstrates the authority and glory of the throne of God. In Revelation, the glory of the throne in heaven is seen.

There are false christs in both books. Both books tell about the killing of the people of God for their faith. We are told that everlasting fire was prepared for the devil and his angels in Matthew. The rebellious of the earth are called cursed and go into the everlasting fire. Revelation reveals that the devil and his angels will be cast out of heaven. The beast, the false prophet, and the devil are thrown into the lake of fire. "And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:15). Angels in Matthew gather the saints from all the earth. The saints are summoned to come to the marriage of the Lamb in Revelation. Revelation speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. In Matthew, we are told, "Heaven and earth shall pass away." Jesus teaches the beatitudes on one of the seven mountains in Matthew. There are seven beatitudes in Revelation.

Both books speak about the desecration of the temple. Both books tell about signs in the heavens. In Matthew, Jesus teaches about the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Revelation reveals the truth about

Mystery Babylon. The presentation of the kingdom in Matthew pointed to the future age to come when all evil will be judged, and the redeemed will witness the glorious reign of Jesus Christ. This truth is also disclosed in Revelation. In Revelation and Matthew, we find angels blowing trumpets at the end of this age. One cannot fully comprehend the last mystery in the Bible, which is in Revelation, apart from the Mystery Kingdom revealed by Jesus in the kingdom book.

The book of Matthew speaks of prophetic events in the last days and the coming judgment against the kingdoms of the world. To understand the last mystery in the Bible, we must look to the first mystery. To understand the last book in the Bible, we must look to the first book of the New Testament. The mystery of the seven mountains is found in the last book of the New Testament, but the answer to the mystery is given in the first book. God provides the answer to the question before the question ever arises.

6



The King of Kings on Seven Places Called a Mountain in the Kingdom Book

Mountains are very prominent in the book of the Bible that reveals the Mystery Kingdom of God by the Son of God. Jesus is on seven places called a mountain by the Holy Spirit in the book of Matthew. These are the places where the Son of God reveals the truth, power, glory, and authority of heaven. Throughout history, successive kingdoms have ruled over these mountains in a blasphemous affront to the Lord. A seventh kingdom controlled by the Antichrist will rule over these mountains in the future. We contend that the harlot of Revelation 17 sits on these same mountains.

The number seven in the Bible is symbolic of completeness and perfection. The complete revelation of God's will for the earth and the salvation of man are revealed through Jesus. The seven mounts of Matthew are not mere background props; they convey a crucial message. We

believe Kingsbury's conclusion that the mountains in Matthew are the chosen sites used to proclaim Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel is correct.¹²⁵

There is an association between the arks and the tabernacles with mountains in the Bible. The mounts of Matthew are the sites where Jesus fulfills the symbolism related to the arks and the tabernacles. Jesus is the tabernacle, priest, altar, and sacrifice.¹²⁶ The purpose of the law was to bring us to Christ (Gal. 3:24). All the symbolism associated with the ark of the covenant pointed to the ministry and work of Jesus Christ.¹²⁷ All the symbolism portrayed by Noah's ark is also fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus is our ark of safety and refuge through the storms of this life. He is our ark of salvation from sin and the effects of sin.

Noah's ark and the ark of the covenant were identified with mountains. The two tablets of the law placed in the ark of the covenant came from the mountain of God. Noah's ark was associated with Mount Ararat, while the ark of the covenant was associated with Mount Sinai, Mount Gibeon, Mount Ebal, Mount Gerizim, Mount Zion, and Mount Moriah. When we see Jesus on the heights in Israel, it is the fulfillment of the symbolism of the ark and tabernacle on the mount of God. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal were witnesses to the blessings and curses that lay before Israel, depending on their obedience to God. The seven mountains in Matthew are witnesses that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Five different structures in the Bible reveal God's habitations. The habitations of God were related to the following structures: the "Ark of Noah, the Tabernacle of Moses, the Tabernacle of David, the Temple of Solomon, and the New Jerusalem, the city of God."¹²⁸ These structures and the habitations of God were connected to mountains. David used the Hebrew word *har* (mountain) synonymously with the tabernacle. Jesus Christ is the true tabernacle and ark of God. He is intimately involved with the mountains in Matthew. The seven mountains of Matthew are associated with the kingdom of God and the book of Revelation. The central image of Revelation is the throne. It appears no less

than forty times.¹²⁹ The idea of the throne of God in association with seven mountains was not something alien to the Jewish mind. We find it in the ancient book of Enoch.

In recent years there has been an increase in awareness of the importance of the biblical mountains and their spiritual significance. Kingsbury believes the mountains of Matthew are associated with the sonship of Jesus Christ.¹³⁰ Donaldson focuses on six mountains, demonstrating they point to the sonship and obedience of Christ, the eschatological community, and salvation history.¹³¹ Others view the mountains as geographical formations that act as background props. They ignore the dramatic events that take place on them and the fact that the Messiah is intimately connected with them.

We agree with the conclusions of Kingsbury, Donaldson, and others concerning the importance of the mountains in Matthew. We want to focus on the fact that God calls seven specific places a mountain in the kingdom book, which reveals Jesus as the Son of God and the true King of Israel. Origen associated the mountains of Matthew with spiritual and physical transformations. He believed Jesus on the mount of healing was a representation of the Church.¹³²

Why were the mountains chosen as the places where many dramatic events took place in the life of Jesus? Some believe the choice of mountains was because being on a mountain heightens our senses and affects our perspective. Are we to believe God chose the mountains of Israel to be the places where many important events took place in Matthew because the mountain heightens our senses? Does the sensory stimulation from being on a mountain in and of itself affect the events that took place on them? Such a simplistic and emotive explanation cannot begin to explain why the mountains are the sites where God chooses, instructs, tests, and commissions his earthly agents. It does not tell why the mountains are so prominent in the Old Testament, the book of Matthew, the life of Jesus, and eschatological events.

The heights in Israel were not chosen as the prominent locations in the presentation of the kingdom of God because being on a mount

makes one feel warm and fuzzy all over. The mounts must be related to spiritual truth. What is the key to understanding the prominence of the mountains in Matthew? Is it just the symbolic significance of the mountain held by pagans? Biblical idioms and symbolism influenced the Jews more than pagan symbols.¹³³ We must look to the Holy Scriptures to know the symbolism of the mountain.

The only mountain named in Matthew is the Mount of Olives. This mount does not compare in height or splendor to many other mountains. This truth should prove that it is not the mount itself that is significant, but rather the symbolic truth that it portrays. What makes the mountains unique is the fact that Jesus is there. What makes them significant is that they are the sites chosen by the Holy Spirit for Jesus to reveal the truth, power, and glory of God. In Jesus's conversation with the Samaritan woman, he deals with a false belief about mountains held by many in Israel. A mount was not holy in itself. This is true whether Mount Gerizim or the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The presence of the Lord on a mountain makes it holy. Our perspective should be influenced by the presence of Jesus on the mountains and the biblical truth associated with them.

On the first place called a mountain in Matthew, Satan offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus demonstrates perfect obedience and reliance upon the Word of God to defeat Satan (Matt. 4:8). On the second mountain, we see Jesus teaching about the kingdom of God, which stands in stark contrast to the wisdom of the world and the kingdoms of the world.

Jesus reaches out to Jews and Gentiles with compassion and love. He meets the physical and spiritual needs of the people. Jesus commands Satan to depart, and he obeys. Demons are ordered to be quiet, and they are silent. They are told to leave their victims, and they flee. The howling wind and the raging sea become calm after a rebuke from Jesus. Jesus came as the Lamb of God concerning our salvation, but in confronting Satan's kingdom, he is a warrior who makes demons tremble. He is a

warrior who has all power and authority over all the principalities of evil. In confronting the kingdom of darkness, Jesus is the Lion of Judah.

Some acknowledge the importance of mountains in Matthew, but few have viewed these seven mountains as a distinct group. It is through the “bow” of the first and seventh mountain of Matthew, and under this arch, Jesus Christ fulfills the will and rule of God through humble obedience and sacrifice.¹³⁴ The truth proclaimed by the prophets in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus as God’s Son and his chosen King. The glory, power, mercy, and love of God were manifested on the earth through Jesus.

The first place called a mountain in Matthew is not even named. On this mountain, Jesus is victorious over Satan. “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him (Matt.4:8-11).

What transpired on this mountain was indeed a depiction of two spiritual kingdoms in conflict. This event can be thought of as an attack by Satan. The voice from heaven had recently announced that Jesus was the Son of God at his baptism. While a public announcement to all present, it was also “an eschatological announcement proclaiming that the final struggle is about to begin, and the usurping role of the fallen heavenly creatures is about to end.”¹³⁵ Satan directs his attacks against Christ’s submission to the will of the Father. We see on this mountain that Satan and his kingdom have no power over the Son of God.

Abraham’s testing on a mountain was to see if he would be obedient to God and offer his son as a sacrifice. Satan offers Jesus the kingdoms of the world, but the rule over the earth was promised to him in Psalms. He wanted Jesus to accept what was already his but contrary to the will and plan of the Father. Jesus chose the way of obedience and

self-sacrifice that led to victory. The path to victory was through the cross. The words and wisdom of man do not defeat Satan. His defeat is by the living Word and Wisdom of God.

The Bible does not tell us the location of the first mountain in Matthew. Some believe the incident was a vision because there is no mountain where all the kingdoms of the world can be seen. We do not know how Jesus viewed the kingdoms of the world and their glory. This does not mean this event did not take place on a high mountain. The location of the other six mountains in Matthew is in the area of the Promised Land. Should we not presume this mountain is also? Israel was chosen and ordained to rule over all the nations of the world. Jesus came but to the House of Israel. The offer to Jesus from a high mountain in Israel was a mocking affront to the rule of God. It was an act of blasphemy.

Twelve times the phrase “high mountain” occurs in the Bible, and this phrase has a direct relationship to Israel. The number twelve is used concerning the temple of Solomon. There were twelve Patriarchs, twelve sons of Israel, and twelve tribes of Israel. This number is also related to the perfection of government or governmental rule. In the Bible, the phrase “high mountain” is used about the sins of Israel, the king of Israel, and the glory of Christ’s future kingdom. The expression is also seen in the book of Revelation. The phrase “high mountain” also appears frequently in apocalyptic literature, and it is associated with Mount Zion.¹³⁶ The phrase “high mountain” has a direct association with the spiritual conflict in Revelation. The phrase “high mountain” first occurs in connection with an oracle concerning ancient Babylon, and the last time this phrase is used, it is about the heavenly city of New Jerusalem. Mystery Babylon is the antithesis of New Jerusalem.

There is another significant reason why we believe the first mountain in Matthew was an actual mountain. We see the pattern in the Bible where forty days are directly associated with a real mountain. After forty days in the flood, Noah’s ark finally settles on a mountain (Ararat). Moses fasts for forty days before he received the second set of tablets on a mountain (Sinai). Elijah fasts for forty days and nights while going to

“Horeb, the mountain of God.” Jesus reveals that he is the risen Lord for forty days after his resurrection to many people. He goes to the Mount of Olives and ascends into heaven. The mountain is the place of testing, ordeals, victory, and revelation. If all the other periods of forty days were associated with an actual mountain, indeed the victory of Jesus over Satan on an exceeding high mountain after fasting for forty days and nights was also associated with a real mountain.

Why are mountains prominent in Matthew? The mountains convey spiritual truth. The same temptations are described in Luke, but not in the same order. In the book of Luke, Jesus is presented as the savior of the world. Matthew presents Jesus as the King of Kings. The mountain is symbolic of spiritual rule and authority and the implementation of the will of God. The sequence of the wilderness, temple, and high mountain points to an important truth. Some believe that the sequence of the temptations in Matthew is to stress the final temptation of Jesus, and his victory over Satan takes place on a “high mountain.” We contend the mountain symbolizes spiritual power and authority. This event reveals that Jesus is exercising spiritual power and authority over the forces of evil. Also, the temptations in Matthew end with Jesus using his power by commanding Satan to leave. Satan recognizes the authority of Jesus and departs. It is immediately after being victorious over Satan’s temptations and attacks that Jesus begins his ministry. “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt: 4:17).”

The seven mountains of Matthew are a distinct group. There is an undeniable connection between the first mountain event where Jesus rejects Satan’s offer of the rule over the kingdoms of the world and the last mountain event of Matthew 28:16-20, where Jesus proclaims all power on earth and in heaven is given to him. Satan had the right to offer these kingdoms, for he is called the “prince of this world.” The Bible chronicles the loss of dominion over the earth by Adam, but Jesus, the second Adam, reclaimed it. The other mountain events show Jesus was exercising the power of God over the kingdom of Satan.

The circumstances surrounding the temptation of Adam and Jesus are very different. The testing of Adam is in a beautiful garden, but Jesus faces temptation in a desert and on a mountain. Adam was tested under ideal circumstances, while Jesus faces temptation in isolated and barren places and with the pain of hunger. In the three temptations, Jesus is tempted with the things that many men throughout history have sought. He tempts Jesus with physical comfort and satisfaction of the flesh (turning rocks into bread), and fame, which would have been the result of surviving a leap from the highest point of the temple. Satan offers the power and glory of all the kingdoms of the world. Adam failed when tempted. The result of his failure led to the end of his intimate relationship with God. It ended man's access to paradise. It is only through Jesus Christ that man's relationship with God can be restored. Upon this high mountain in Matthew, the Son of God defeats Satan with the Word and Wisdom of God. Through his life, ministry, death, and resurrection, Jesus defeated the forces of evil. In the future, the redeemed will live and walk where the Lord dwells and will be with him forever. Until that day, we must still contend with the kingdom of darkness.

We see the contrast of Jesus's victory over temptations and Israel's failures when tempted in the past and the present. From the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948, its chosen way of preservation has been through the might of arms and alliances, most notably with the United States. In the past, Israel looked to Egypt for protection against Babylon, but Egypt could not defend even herself. Israel's preservation as a nation is by the power of God. One day in the future, the nation will realize this truth, and all Israel will accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah as he rules and reigns over all people and principalities.

Some view Jesus's life depicted in Matthew as a midrashic portrayal of Israel. Jesus's journey through Matthew reveals him as the Messiah and King of Israel. The title for early Christians was "those of the way." They were followers of Jesus Christ, for he is the only way to God. In following Christ, we will face many trials and spiritual battles against the

forces of evil. Jesus gives us the blueprint for spiritual victory through the seven mountains of Matthew. The triumph over evil is through obedience to the will and the Word of God. If we follow the path of Jesus, our focus and foundation through life's trials and temptations will be the Word of God and the sustaining power of the Holy Spirit.

The second mountain is seen in the fifth chapter of Matthew. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain; and when he was set, his disciples came unto him" (Matt. 5:1). Jesus began to teach his disciples and the people about the kingdom of God. It was usual for the rabbis to sit when they taught. This site is where the greatest teacher of all gives his longest sermon in the New Testament. Without any doubt, this site is associated with spiritual authority. This mountain event is called the Sermon on the Mount.

All cities, states, and nations have laws and regulations that people must obey. Jesus goes beyond the mere wording of the law. He teaches the very heart of the law and the truths of the kingdom of God. The mountain in the Bible symbolizes spiritual rule. That is why a mountain is a place where he begins to teach about the kingdom and the spiritual nature of its inhabitants.

The law laid down specific commandments from the Lord. The Jewish religious leaders perverted the law by making it hypertechnical to the point of absurdity. They perverted its real purpose. Rather than being a guide for the people, it became a yoke around their necks. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exposes the failure of the religious leaders. He teaches that the Father is more interested in the hearts of the people rather than sacrifices. The religious leaders were circumcised in the flesh but not in their hearts.

To be an inhabitant in the kingdom requires the right attitude and beliefs. This is evident in how we live our lives. We are to love the Father above all, and if we love the Father, we will seek to follow his commandments. We are also to love our fellow man. The love of God and others should be evident in how we conduct our daily lives and not in the outward display of self-righteous ritualistic practices. God is more

interested in the intent and actions of our hearts. The public display of self-righteousness by some of the Jewish religious leaders was nothing but a cover to hide the actual spiritual condition of their hearts. Jesus would later compare these self-righteous people to a cup that was clean on the outside but filthy on the inside.

The inhabitants of the kingdom will display the qualities of obedience, self-sacrifice, compassion, mercy, servitude, and a love for God and people. Some of the great men of the world may view these as weaknesses, but they are of great value in the kingdom. There can be no dual citizenship in God's kingdom. The citizens of the kingdom of God cannot also spiritually be citizens of the world under the control of Satan.

The kingdom that Jesus proclaims is in stark contrast to the kingdoms of the world. The values held by the citizens of the kingdom are antithetical to the belief systems of the world. To be great in the kingdom, one must serve others. To be great in the world, one must command others. Jesus taught that those who follow him would inevitably be at odds with the kingdoms and authorities of this world. The world will readily recognize the citizens of the kingdom of God. It is not by mere words, outward ornaments, or apparel; the way they conduct their lives identifies them.

The people of Israel went up on the mountain where the tabernacle was to pray and seek guidance before a battle. The ark represented the very presence of God. The ark represented the throne of God. Here, on this mountain, the true ark is in the midst of the people of Israel. "The ark symbolized God's meeting with his people in grace and on the ground of atonement. The ark contained the Decalogue (Exod. 5:16), meaning that God who thus met his people had revealed his will and his ethical nature, which represented his demands upon his people."¹³⁷ The ark was associated with the law. The Ten Commandments were under the mercy seat. All need God's mercy, for there was just one man who was perfect and able to obey all of God's commandments. The mercy seat points to Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross for the remission of sins.

Moses gave Israel the law through specific commandments from the

Lord. On this site, Jesus makes known the full meaning and intent of the law. He reveals the heart of the law to Israel and not absurd stipulations taught by the religious leaders. When the ark was with Israel, they were victorious in the battles over their physical enemies. The citizens of the kingdom would need Jesus, the real ark of God to dwell in their renewed hearts to be victorious over their spiritual enemies. As Israel was confident in the victory while the ark was in their presence, so can Christians who have Jesus dwelling in their hearts.

The mountain is the place where the Lord tests his earthly representatives. It is the site where God meets with his people and makes his truth known through his chosen mediator. God's chosen mediator then imparts this truth to his people. Many see the meeting on this mountain in Matthew as an allusion to the Sinai experience. Moses was the representative at Sinai, but here, there is one greater than Moses. At Sinai, the people gathered at the bottom of the mountain, but through Jesus, those who have faith can ascend to meet with the only mediator between God and men.

The kingdom that Jesus proclaimed differed from the kingdom sought by the zealots, and the message he declared is strikingly different from the teaching of the religious leaders of Israel. Jesus did not declare the letter of the law merely through the outward observances of rituals. Jesus taught that the foundation of the law was love and obedience. The transformation of the human heart would not come through the animal sacrifices offered by men. It would only come through accepting the ultimate sacrifice offered by God.

The people were able to discern the difference between the message Jesus proclaimed and the words of the religious leaders of Israel. After he had finished speaking, the crowds were amazed at his teaching. They discerned he taught as one possessing the very knowledge and authority of heaven, unlike the hypocritical scribes. On this mountain, Jesus reveals intimate knowledge about the kingdom of God. Upon this mount, Jesus teaches us how to pray. "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy

will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen” (Matt. 6:9-13). Upon the seven mountains of Matthew, Jesus reveals the kingdom, power and glory of God.

We find mountain three is in Matthew 14:23 after Jesus miraculously feeds thousands of people who were mostly Jews. The Bible reveals that there were five thousand men plus women and children. He immediately departs from the people and his disciples and goes to a mountain to pray alone. This mountain can be called the mountain of prayer. Some who recognize the importance and the spiritual significance of the mountain symbol in Matthew pay very little attention to this mountain event. It should serve to highlight the importance of prayer, which is the direct personal communication with the Father. It is an intimate conversation between the child of God and the Father.

Some have seen this mountain as pointing to the Church. The Lord’s house is to be a house of prayer. Jesus teaches the importance of our acknowledgment of the love and holiness of God through direct communication instead of vain repetitions. Can there be anything more important in our daily lives than speaking to God and worshipping him? We know Jesus was perfect and sinless in all his ways, but we also know he viewed prayer as essential in his life. This fact should give us reason to see prayer as necessary in the lives of all men and women.

What does this mountain event have to do with the kingdoms of the world and the kingdom of God? The Gospel of John tells us why Jesus sends the people away before he goes to pray on this mountain. He had performed a miracle and provided food for many people. Jesus blessed five loaves and two fish, and this provided enough food for all the people. The food that remained filled twelve baskets. The people recognized the act as a miracle and wanted to make him king. He would not accept the kingship by the hands of men. He chose to do the will of the Father instead. He knew his rule over all the kingdoms of the world

would come through the cross. What transpired with this event points to the future when the King of Kings will rule over the earth and provide for all his people.

Jesus goes to this mountain to pray alone while he sends his disciples to the other side of the sea by ship. In Matthew 6:9, he teaches the people how to pray. We can discern some things about how he prayed from what he teaches on the second mountain in Matthew. Of course, there are times for the people of God to pray in public, but Jesus said we should also pray to God in secret. The One who was the most intimate with God taught that prayer was to acknowledge God as our Father. When we pray to God, our Father, we are acknowledging that we are his children. We are to recognize God as the Creator and sovereign Ruler over all his creation. We should pray for the Lord's will to be done on earth and in heaven. We should pray for his kingdom to be fully manifested over the world. Those who first seek the kingdom will have their needs met.

While alone on this mountain, we believe Jesus was praying for the Father's will and the coming of the kingdom in glory and power. We do not know the full extent of his prayers. Surely, he knew the faith of his disciples would soon be tested. While alone on this mountain, he must have prayed for his disciples to have faith in the coming storm. In the spiritual and physical storms of our lives, we should always know we are not without a divine intercessor. He knows and cares about all our problems, and he has the ultimate authority to act on our behalf.

What does this mountain have to do with the throne of God? The throne of God is a place of worship and praise. The throne is the place where the prayers and praise of the saints are directed. Why should we pray? When we pray, our Father should not be treated like a genie in a bottle to have our desires met. The purpose of prayer is not to inform the Lord of anything. He is concerned about our lives and the problems we face, but he knows everything about us. He knew the difficulties we would face before we were born. The mere act of praying is evidence of

our faith in God. When we pray, we are asking the Lord for his will to be manifested in our lives.¹³⁸

We should pray for the Lord's will, knowing this does not always equate to life without difficulties and pain. Sometimes we are placed in unpleasant circumstances for reasons we do not understand. We desire for the problem to be taken away immediately, or for us to be removed from an uncomfortable situation. Our Father, in his infinite wisdom, knows a greater good will come to others and us if, for a time, we face adversity and even pain. Whatever situations we find ourselves in, we have the assurance the Lord is with us. Like Jesus calmed the storm and fear in his disciples' lives, the Lord can grant the grace to face the storms and fear in our lives. When we stand on the promises of God in trying times, God receives glory, and our faith is made stronger.

We communicate more with the ones we love. Prayer is evidence of our trust and dependence on God. Through prayer, we admit our failures, spiritual needs, and our reliance on the awesome power of the One who reigns over all "in heaven and in earth." The book of Ephesians shows that prayer is essential for believers in their fight against evil powers. Prayer is the key to the operation of all the other spiritual weapons.¹³⁹ Jesus came to "destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Prayer is the chief weapon of the Christian in waging spiritual warfare.¹⁴⁰ In Revelation 8:4, the prayers of the saints are offered on the golden altar, which is before the throne. These prayers precede the start of the trumpet judgments against the rebellious of the earth. There is power in prayer. God hears the prayers of his people. The Bible reveals that God will act on the prayers of his people according to his divine will, wisdom, and purpose.

Jesus considered prayer essential for the spirit of man as food is necessary for the body. We see him praying before special events in his life. He prayed before performing miracles and before choosing his disciples. Jesus prayed before the trials in his life and the lives of his disciples. He prayed before being transfigured on a mountain with the radiant brilliance of the glory of God. However, Jesus also prayed after important

events. Why were the mountains the favorite sites for Jesus to pray? Since the mountain is symbolic of spiritual rule and authority, one can perceive why it was the place selected by him to pray. He knew the Father was on his throne upon the mount of God and was in control of all things.

What does this mountain have to do with the ark and the tabernacle? The Jews saw two different types of prayers. There were the prayers of adoration of God, and there were prayers of supplication (intercession).¹⁴¹ Edersheim tells us both prayers found expression in the temple services. On this mountain, Jesus is the High Priest. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was chosen to offer up incense in the temple. Zacharias was alone in the holy place on the Temple Mount while burning incense. The burning of incense on the golden altar within the holy place was the most honorable task in the daily service. The Bible equates prayer to offering up incense.¹⁴² “May my prayer be before you like incense (Ps. 141:2).” Revelation tells us the “golden bowls full of incense” are the prayers of the saints.

Alone on this mountain, we see Jesus, our High Priest, offering up prayers (incense) for his people. Many have seen this mountain event as depicting Jesus as the great mediator for his people in trials, troubles, and tribulations. Jesus is now seated at the right hand of the Father, and he is our High Priest and intercessor.

While praying on this mountain, Jesus knew the faith of his disciples would soon be tested by the powerful waves and wind of a storm. Indeed, a storm can represent the troubles in the lives of all Christians. After praying on this mountain, we see him amid the storm. He walks on the raging sea and comes to his disciples. During trials and tribulations, Jesus is with us. He is aware of our problems, needs, circumstances, and failures. He unceasingly intercedes on our behalf.

Those who are citizens of the kingdom of God will be tried by the enemies of our souls. We should not think it is strange when this comes. The trial stands as evidence of our position as citizens of God’s kingdom. There was a reason for the testing of Abraham and Jesus on a mountain.

Since the mountain is symbolic of spiritual rule, it is the fitting place for the testing of God's chosen.

No matter what circumstance or temptation arises, the Lord is still on his throne on the highest mountain. We can stand like a rock, for our foundation rests on the very throne of God. Though our enemies encircle us in the daytime, we can face the day with joy, not fear. Though they encamp about us at night, we can have a restful sleep. We can be calm in the face of adversity because through our spiritual eyes, we can see just like Elisha's servant saw that we are not in the battle alone. The great Shepherd has all power and authority in heaven and earth, and he ever watches over his people.

"According to Scripture, prayer can save a nation (Ex32:10-14), and the lack of prayer can destroy it (Ezek.22:30)."¹⁴³ Through prayer, we can go before the throne of heaven with our supplications. "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and I will shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3). "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto to you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. 7:7-8).

We find mountain four in Matthew 15:29-39. Jesus went up into a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the disabled, the mute, and many others and lay them at his feet; he healed them. Again, we see Jesus exercising spiritual authority and power. Again, we see the symbolism of the tabernacle and the temple being fulfilled. The sixth chapter of Isaiah depicts God on a heavenly throne with his feet in the temple and resting upon the ark. Similar depictions are seen in Psalms 99:5 and 132:7-8. In Ezekiel 43:7, God calls the Holy of Holies, "the place of my throne, the place where I set my feet." Wherever Jesus is, that is where we find the real ark and the temple of God.¹⁴⁴

In the first century, many in Israel believed all illnesses and physical impairments were caused by the sin of those afflicted or by the sins of their parents. We see evidence of this in the Gospel of John. Jesus is

asked whether the blindness of a man since birth was due to his sin or the sins of his parents. He informs the people that the blindness was not the result of sin but happened so the work of God could be revealed in his life. The Dead Sea Scrolls chronicles the rules that prohibited those with physical illnesses and defects from having access to the temple. “No madman, or lunatic, or simpleton, or fool, no blind man or maimed, or lame or deaf man and no minor shall enter into the community.”¹⁴⁵ Through Jesus, the mediator, people who could not worship in the temple are allowed to enter the throne room of God.

This mount depicts the fulfillment of the symbolism of the ark and the throne of God. The throne is the place where all believers are accepted. The throne of God is the place where people are made whole and new. On this mountain, Jesus is presented as the “good shepherd” taking care of the sheep of Israel (Ezek. 34). “My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.” Through Jesus, upon the mountains of Israel, the following passage was, in part, fulfilled. “I will feed them in good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there they shall lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock and cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God.” We will see the complete fulfillment of this passage when Jesus returns.

Jesus demonstrated that he was the bread of life. He provided not only food for the body but also food for the soul. During his temptation, Jesus would not provide sustenance for his hunger, which he could have done. The second Adam withstood the tempting by Satan, where the first Adam had failed. The first Adam had lost his right to rule over the earth, but the second Adam took it back.

Jesus feeds those who are hungry and all those who thirst. In Revelation 21, being thirsty is symbolic of a desire for spiritual truth and fellowship with God. When Moses and the representatives of Israel met God at Mount Sinai, they partook of a covenant meal (Exod. 24:9-11). This mountain also points to Zion eschatology, for the Jews believed the

Messiah would invite his people to a banquet and this was to take place on Mount Zion.¹⁴⁶

Some refer to this site as the mountain of healing. Origen, like many others, equated the fourth mountain in Matthew, where the four thousand people are fed to the Church. The Church is the place where we find peace and comfort, not just in times of severe trials but in facing the day-to-day problems of life. “We may say, then, that into this mountain where Jesus sits, not only the sound in health go up, but along with the sound, those also who were suffering from various disorders. And, perhaps, this mountain to which Jesus went up and sat is that which is more commonly called the Church, which has been set up through the word of God over the rest of the world and the men upon it; whither go not the disciples only, leaving the multitudes as in the case of the beatitudes, but great multitudes who were not accused themselves of being deaf or suffering from any affliction, but who had such along with themselves.”¹⁴⁷

Again, Jesus performs a miracle to feed a large crowd after blessing seven loaves and several small fish. The people in this chapter are predominantly Gentiles, as opposed to the previous feeding. Jesus once again reaches out to the Gentiles. In the previous feeding, Jesus gave thanks only over the bread, which was the Jewish custom. When feeding these people, Jesus gave thanks over the bread and the fishes. In the first feeding, where the people are primarily Jews, there are twelve baskets left over. Some see this event as pointing to the future blessings for the nation of Israel (twelve tribes). There are seven baskets left over after the feeding of this multitude. Many see this as representative of the Church composed of Gentile and Jew. The seven churches in Revelation are viewed as representative of the Church throughout history. At the first feeding, the Greek word for a basket is the one that was used by the Jews. At this feeding, the word for a basket is one used by Gentiles.¹⁴⁸

Manna was provided from heaven to feed the tribes of Israel while in the desert. Manna was also placed before the ark. “And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and

lay it up before the Lord, to be kept for your generations. As the Lord commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came to the borders of the land of Canaan” (Exod. 16:33-35).

The Son of God provides manna for the body and the spirit, not just for Jews but Gentiles also. This mountain also points to the great heavenly city yet to descend from heaven to earth. It will be a glorious city filled with wonder and splendor, but the essential truth about this city is that God will dwell there among his people and will provide for them forever. This great city stands in contrast to the idolatrous city Mystery Babylon at the end of this age.

We see mountain five in Matthew 17:1, “And after six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.” What does this mountain have to do with the temple and the ark? The “Shekinah theophany” upon this mountain was archetypal of the Mount of Assembly.¹⁴⁹ Jesus is our High Priest, and he is also the true temple of God. The high priest on the Day of Atonement would enter the holiest place of the temple dressed in a white dress and a girdle that was also white.

The temple of Jesus’s day was magnificent in its splendor, but Jesus saw something else. Ezekiel had seen the vision of the Shekinah glory of God departing the temple hundreds of years before. Jesus calls the temple of his time “a den of thieves.” The Shekinah glory that once had filled the temple and appeared upon the mercy seat of the ark now rests upon Jesus. God speaks from the ark, and here on this mountain, the voice of God proclaims Jesus is his Son. The Shekinah glory had descended on the ark at the dedication of the Tabernacle of Moses on Mount Sinai. The Shekinah glory was also associated with the ark in the temple on Mount Moriah.

Matthew 17:5 tells us a bright cloud overshadowed those on the

mountain and a voice out of the cloud declared, “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” “From the time the tabernacle was placed in the midst of Israel until they miraculously crossed the Jordan River the glory cloud of God was right above the ark. The cloudy pillar was God’s movable throne while the Israelites were on the march; His stationary throne while they were encamped” “The pillar served the purpose of enveloping or enshrining the Shekinah, a bright refulgent flame, the symbol of God’s presence with his people. The cloudy pillar was a guide, a shade, a shield, an oracle, and an avenger. Christ is all these things to all Christians who journey through life.”¹⁵⁰ Again, we see the symbolism of the ark and the tabernacle fulfilled through Jesus associated with a mountain.

What does this mountain have to do with spiritual rule? Some view the transfiguration as a brief glimpse of the power and the glory of the future reign of Jesus Christ over the earth.¹⁵¹ The Jews looked for the Messiah who would come to drive out the enemies of Israel and fulfill the promises the Lord had made to the tribes of Israel. They longed for a Messiah who would restore the glory that was associated with David and Solomon. Most Jews wanted the Romans to be driven out of their land and the kingdom of Israel restored. What Jesus taught the disciples about his death was antithetical to the concept most Jews held about the coming Messiah.

Probably, even the disciples at first had thought Jesus would set up an immediate kingdom. Jesus’s teaching revealed he must first suffer for the sins of the world. The three disciples who saw the transfiguration were the ones most intimate with Jesus. These men became the pillars of the early Church. They witnessed the glory and the power of God. Jesus had stated that one day they would rule and reign in his glorious kingdom. To share in his glory, they would have to share in his trials. These three, along with other faithful disciples, would face trials and persecution. Many would even face death at the hands of the world.

The early Church considered it an honor to suffer for the cause of Christ. Many of the early believers experienced torture and gruesome

deaths. Those Christians did not face the lions and the fire because of some macho fatalistic idealism. Their hope was in Jesus, who had overcome the very enemy of our souls. Their eyes were on the path of Jesus, and they knew his path led to the cross. As the followers of Christ, they did not think it strange that they would also suffer at the hands of the world.

This mountain event offered three of Jesus's closest disciples a brief glimpse of the glory of Jesus's future kingdom.¹⁵² In the future, the world will see the glory of God and the promises made by him fulfilled in the reign of Jesus Christ. "As they are on the mountain, there appeared before them Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus." The two who appeared with Jesus represented the Law and the Prophets. Their presence here with Jesus reveals he was the Messiah. The Law and the Prophets pointed to Jesus Christ. The disciples represent the Church, while Moses and Elijah represent the saints of the Old Testament. Others see these two as representing the dead saints and those saints who will be raptured in the future. The fulfillment of the Old Testament is seen in the New Covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ shed at Golgotha and his glorious resurrection. This mountain event is associated with the glory of the King and his authority.

The throne of God is found amid the Glory cloud. Whenever we see the Glory cloud, it is intimately associated with the power, rule, and glory of God. Kline refers to it as God's mobile chariot throne that is the site of his "divine council" and "court of judgment."¹⁵³ On the mount of transfiguration, the presence of the Glory cloud is seen and the voice of God is heard. We believe that Jesus, on the mountains of Matthew, points to the very throne of the Lord. There is a clear affirmation of this on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The Bible chronicles other occurrences of the Glory cloud associated with a mountain of Matthew. In Ezekiel, the glory of God went up from the temple and was over the Mount of Olives. Jesus ascends to heaven in a cloud from the Mount of Olives. The transfiguration of Jesus alludes to his return to the earth in glory (the Parousia) at the end of this age.

The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew reveals that Jesus will return “in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

The throne of God and the Glory cloud are not only associated with the glory and the power of God but also the judgment of God. The Son coming in the Glory cloud is related to the defeat of the nations and the judgment on all evil. The Mount of Olives will be the site of his return. New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, seen in Revelation “is the ultimate likeness of the Spirit Glory, for it is a city transfigured in light and its light is the glory of God (Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5); it is the tabernacle of God (Rev. 21:3)”¹⁵⁴

Mountain six is the Mount of Olives (Matt. 21:1, 21:21, 24:3, 26:30). What does this mountain have to do with spiritual rule? It is from this mountain that Jesus Christ ascends to the very throne of heaven, at the right hand of the Father. The angels asked, “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). All authority and power were given to him, not only in this age but also in the age to come (Eph. 1:21). Jesus must also descend to rule and reign over all the kingdoms of the earth. The Mount of Olives is associated with both the ascension of Jesus Christ and his descent back to earth.

The Mount of Olives stands out as a prominent site during the week preceding the crucifixion. The Mount of Olives is part of a mountain ridge east of Jerusalem, and its name comes from the fact in the past it had many olive trees growing on it. The olive was a symbol of peace, but this mountain was the site of the agony and betrayal of Jesus. Some believe this alludes to the high price paid for our peace through the suffering of our Lord.

Many believe the olive tree represents the spiritual life of Israel. Paul uses the olive tree to demonstrate that Israel had been first in God’s plan and purpose. The Gentile Christians can be called spiritual Israel. The Gentiles are not symbolized as a new olive tree. They have been grafted in with Israel (olive tree) and will share in her blessings. Many believe

the oil of the olive tree represents the Holy Spirit, and the olive tree (Israel) was to be full of the Spirit of God. The Gentiles (the grafted branch) receive nourishing life from the olive tree.

After the Lord's Supper, Jesus goes to this mountain to pray. The Mount of Olives was the site where the sacrifice of the red heifer took place, and it faced toward the temple. This was the site of the sprinkling of the blood by the high priest. It was the crossing place for the scapegoat. The true King of Israel leaves the Mount of Olives and goes into the holy city riding on a donkey as foretold in the Old Testament. It was the site of Jesus's ascension and the site of the last meeting with his disciples.

This mountain is closely associated with the glory and the truth of God, but it is also associated with blasphemy. In the Old Testament, this site was called the Mount of Corruption. Here, Jesus speaks of the future desecration of the temple that was revealed by the prophet Daniel (Matt. 24:15-16). The throne of God is a place of blessing for his people, but it is also a place of judgment for his enemies. Likewise, the ark brought victory for righteous Israel, but it brought defeat and destruction to the enemies of Israel.

Jesus begins to teach about the end of this age and the coming judgment of the rebellious nations of the world. He wept for Jerusalem on this mountain. King David had fled over the Mount of Olives to escape from his son, Absalom. The Bible reveals the remnant of Israel will escape through the passageway made through this mountain. "The Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights in the day of battle. On that day, his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and it will split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south" (Zech. 14:3-4). "And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee (Zech. 14:5)."

“And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one (Zech. 14:9).”

What does this mountain have to do with the ark? The people of Israel would shout when the ark came into the camp (Isa. 4:5-6). Jesus is greeted with shouts of hosanna as he comes from the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. “The ark was the place where the high priest and the people inquired for the mind of God (Josh. 21:1-2). We should always seek to know the mind of God (1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 7:26-27).”¹⁵⁵ Jesus is God’s revelator. In response to the disciples’ questions, Jesus talks about events at the end of this age. The truth revealed in Matthew 24 concerns not only the time of the judgment of the wicked but also the time of preservation of the righteous.

The Mount of Olives has witnessed the truth of God, but it also witnessed the blasphemy that was allowed by Solomon and many other kings who ruled over Israel. This mountain has seen centuries of desecration of the holy mount. However, this mount is associated with the end of the evil rule and eternal rest for the people of God. The King of Kings will descend from the very throne of God to this mount to end evil rule. The King of Kings does not return to the hills of Rome or the ancient city of Babylon to signal the end of satanic rule over the earth. To enact judgment on all evil, he returns to the sixth mountain of Matthew and splits it into two parts. One-part shifts to the east, while the other shifts toward the west. This mountain is associated with the central message of the book of Revelation. It is associated with the reign of the Messiah over the earth and judgment against all evil.

The seventh site God calls a mountain in Matthew is found in Matthew 28. It is one of the most important passages of Scripture. “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:16.)”

Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world on the first mountain in Matthew. He understands the spiritual symbolism of the mountain. Jesus chooses a mountain located in Galilee to tell his disciples he has been given power, dominion, and authority over all kingdoms and all things. Christ’s proclamation on this mountain reveals his complete victory over all evil principalities and kingdoms. This last mountain, like the other mountains of Matthew, is associated with spiritual authority and dominion, not the mere rule of the kingdoms of the world. Jesus later ascended to heaven as revealed in the book of Acts, but the conflict with the kingdom of Satan will continue. Here, the King of Kings gives marching orders to his spiritual warriors. The kingdom of God will be advanced through his disciples. They are to go conquer the earth by teaching, baptizing, and making disciples of those who will believe.

The disciples present on this mountain became the pillars of the early Church. These early Christians were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth will be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:18-19).” These disciples go forth with the power and authority of heaven. Because Jesus had been victorious over Satan, his followers can also.

The commission Jesus gives his disciples is different from the one given in chapter ten. This is referred to as the Great Commission. The Gentiles were excluded in the first commission, but now all will be included. This commission is worldwide. The disciples were instructed to go to all the nations. Each of the seven mountains in Matthew has to do with the kingdom of God and his chosen King. In this final mountain event, we see the fulfillment of many prophecies.

It is not by chance that the last commissioning of the disciples takes place on a mountain in Galilee called (Galilee of the Gentiles). Jesus

specifically chose this mountain. We have spoken of the Jewish character of the book of Matthew, but this book and the seven mountains point forward to the Church. Matthew is the only Gospel that mentions the Church. The Great Commission was not given just to the disciples. This commission is given to all the disciples of Jesus Christ throughout the last two thousand years. It will continue until the Gospel has been spread to all nations. Christians are to proclaim the truth of God to all the nations. They are to teach, baptize, and make disciples of all those who accept Jesus as their savior. They will be involved in a spiritual battle against the forces of evil, but they have been given the spiritual weapons to defeat the enemies of God.

The reign of Jesus Christ has not yet been manifested over all people and all nations of the earth. This does not negate the fact that he is already royally enthroned, and his power is absolute. The world may be ignorant of this truth, but Christians should be comforted in knowing that Jesus promised to be with us, even to the very consummation of this age. When he returns, he will put an end to evil rule and false worship. He will cleanse his mountains. In the future, all those of the nations will go up to the holy mountain to worship God. Those who have been redeemed by Christ are called kings and priests unto God and will rule and reign with him.

The mountain was the place where God met with men. The Church is God's house and the place where we are to gather to meet with him. The very beginning of Matthew points to Gentiles worshiping Jesus through the wise men from the east. At the end of the book, Jesus reaches out to all who will believe. In Matthew, we see the Jews and Gentiles meeting up on the mountains with Jesus, the mediator between God and man. As Christians saved by grace through the blood of Jesus Christ, we can boldly enter the throne room of God. Through faith in Jesus, salvation is open to all people of all nations. Jesus associates the completion of the commission to proclaim the Gospel message to his return to set up his eternal kingdom.

The seven mountains of Matthew are not known for their majestic

height or grandeur. These mountains are important because Jesus exercises spiritual authority and reveals spiritual truths upon them. These seven mountains are associated with the temptation, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. The first mountain in Matthew is associated with all the glory of the kingdoms of the world. The last mountain concerns all power in heaven and earth. These mountains are intimately associated with the great cosmic conflict between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. All that the prophets taught pointed to the truth stated on the seventh mountain. God had a plan for the redemption of the world and a plan to bless all the nations of the world. His plan for the redemption of man and the world is revealed in Jesus Christ. His plan to bless all the nations will be manifested through Israel and her Messiah.

We are to look to the history of Israel chronicled in the Bible, for Israel's journeys, failures, and triumphs were lessons for us. Just as the people of Israel could trust in the promises of the Lord, so can all Christians who put their trust in him. The history of Israel also stands as a solemn warning. Just as the Lord did not overlook the sins of the people he chose and called his own, then neither will he overlook rebellion and sin in the Church. Many in the seven churches of Revelation were involved in the things of the world and the sinful practices of this world. This is true of the Church today.

The mountain in the Bible is symbolic of spiritual rule and authority, and the number seven denotes completeness and perfection. It should not be surprising that the perfection of spiritual rule was manifested by the Son of God on seven mountains in Israel. The mountains of Matthew were the places where people could discern the authority and presence of God. They were the places where the prophetic Word of God was heard, and the message of repentance was proclaimed. On these mountains, no one is excluded because of their ethnic background or life circumstance. God's mercy and his gift of salvation are for all who would receive it. These mountains were the places where Jesus was revealed as the Son of God and the sites where the people worshiped and

glorified God. The wisdom of men instructs us to look to the words of pagan men to interpret the seven mountains of Revelation 17. We can only know the truth of the seven mountains by looking to the Word and Wisdom of God. If the Word of God is our foundation for understanding Revelation 17, we can conclude that the seven mountains where Mystery Babylon sits are the seven mountains of Matthew and not the hills of Rome.

7



Golgotha and the Temple Site

If asked to count the mountains in Matthew, many would say there are eight; others would say there are nine. Many would count the Temple Mount; while others would include Golgotha (Calvary). When the Holy Spirit refers to something as a mystery, it is not something known by the wisdom of men. What is important is what the Bible has to say. The Bible refers to only seven places as a mountain in Matthew. Neither the site of the temple nor Golgotha is called a mountain in the kingdom book.

Golgotha was the site of the greatest act of love and sacrifice the world has ever known. The Father gave his Son as the only perfect sacrifice. The Son willingly offered his life in perfect obedience to the Father for the sins of man. The cross is the ultimate proof of the grace and love of God. Golgotha was also the site of the greatest act of rebellion by the created against the Creator.

In Genesis 3:15, God said he would put enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. The serpent would bruise the heel of Jesus, the seed of the woman. Jesus would bruise the head of the serpent. The word “bruise” means *to gape or to break*.¹⁵⁶ The book of Genesis reveals that Jesus would gash or break the head or the skull of Satan, the serpent. The crucifixion of Jesus took place at Golgotha (the place of the skull). Many Christians refer to the site as Calvary or Mount Calvary. Golgotha was not referred to as Mount Calvary until the fifth century AD. The location was outside of Jerusalem, and it was a place where executions were carried out. Some describe the most likely site as a “small knoll” and indeed not a mountain.

Many viewed Jesus as a carpenter who was the leader of a small Jewish religious community. This carpenter was the King of Kings and the Creator of all things. During his ministry, he performed countless miracles. He healed the sick, caused the blind to see, and cast out demons. He demonstrated power over the wind, the sea, and even death and the grave. He revealed the power and authority of heaven.

At Golgotha, Jesus did not exercise his awesome power and authority over those who carried out his torture and death. The people mocked him and called for him to demonstrate his power. He could have called legions of angels down from heaven. Instead, he chose to suffer at the hands of those whom he had done no wrong. The Creator of all came down to live among men. He left the glorious throne of heaven to suffer one of the most torturous deaths the human mind could conceive.

On the cross, Jesus demonstrated the greatest act of love and humble obedience. There is no doubt that the powers of the kingdom of darkness were behind the death of the very Son of God. For a brief time, Satan must have thought Golgotha was the site of his greatest triumph. Nothing could have been further from the truth. God demanded a perfect sacrifice for the remission of sins. Jesus was the only acceptable sacrifice. Satan did not have the power to send Jesus to the cross, and he did not have the power to keep him on the cross. The cross was God’s

plan for the redemption of man and the defeat of all evil. The cross was foolishness to man, but it demonstrated the very wisdom of God.

The forces of evil knew the Son of God had come to live among men. The evil spirits knew who he was and recognized his authority. In Matthew 8:29, the demons “cried out, saying, ‘What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?’ Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” Paul said that if the princes of this world had understood the wisdom of God, they never would have crucified Jesus. Some believe the princes Paul referred to were earthly rulers. Paul revealed in his writings that he considered spiritual principalities as the real rulers of the earth and our real enemies.

Did the evil principalities think Jesus had come to take control over the kingdoms of the earth by force? Did they believe he had come to set up a political kingdom, as some of Jesus’s followers had thought? It seems clear that Satan and the evil principalities under him did not understand the purpose of why Jesus had come to earth as a man. It is also evident that they did not fathom the full consequences of the crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God, and the only man without the blight of sin. It was through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the enemies of our souls were eternally defeated.

Golgotha was the site of two spiritual kingdoms in conflict. On one side, we see unbridled pride, rebellion, and hatred. On the other side, we see perfect love and obedience. Considering the Lord’s omnipotence and infinite power, one of the amazing things about the cross is how he chooses to defeat Satan. His defeat was by the immeasurable and unfathomable love of the Father and his Son. It was by the perfect obedience of the Son to the will of the Father. God used the very things that these evil beings did not possess to defeat them. Satan was the instigator of the act that sealed his eternal defeat. God had a provision for the salvation of man. It was a simple, yet perfect, plan where perfect love and perfect obedience provided the complete victory over the forces of evil for eternity.

The kingdom of Jesus Christ is represented by a great mountain

that will cover the whole earth in the book of Daniel. This righteous kingdom will rule over every nation and individual. It is fitting that Satan's presumed moment of victory, which was his moment of defeat, would take place on a small knoll and not a mountain. It is fitting that the serpent's skull was broken at a site called "the place of the skull." The foundation of Satan's kingdom is not a mountain. It is built on an artificial mound made up of the ruins of destroyed cities and the bones of the people he has deceived.

To the Christian, the cross is the place of victory over the forces of evil, cleansing, and the eternal symbol of God's love, mercy, and grace. For all those who reject the great gift of salvation, the cross is the place of judgment. The religious leaders who mocked and crucified the very Son of God represent the ultimate blasphemy and rebellion against God. These people are representative of the citizens of Babylon the Great revealed in Revelation. Revelation 11 tells us the "great city" is where our Lord was crucified. He was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem and amid the seven mountains of Matthew. He was the greatest of all prophets. Revelation 17 ascribes the bloodguilt of the saints to Mystery Babylon. Jesus ascribed the guilt of the blood of all the righteous of the earth to the same generation of religious hypocrites who were the instigators of his crucifixion.

The temple is referred to seventeen times in Matthew. Mountains are prevalent in Matthew. The temple site is never once referred to as a mountain by the Holy Spirit. This is an amazing fact, considering the Bible mentions Mount Zion more than one hundred and sixty times.¹⁵⁷ Only seven specific places are called a mountain in Matthew by the Holy Spirit, and the Temple Mount is not one of them.

Why is the temple referred to so many times in Matthew but not the mount on which it sits? In his book *Jesus on a Mountain*, Donaldson points out that we should not look for some holy mountain associated with Jesus's ministry to act as a replacement of Zion. Jesus alone is the replacement of Zion. All the truth and hope associated with Zion are found in Jesus.¹⁵⁸ When John sees the great city called New Jerusalem,

he states, “And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it (Rev. 21:22).” Jesus, the true temple of God, calls the temple built by the hands of men “a den of thieves” and foretells of its coming destruction.

The mountains in Matthew were the sites where many people recognized the authority of Jesus. The religious leaders at the Temple Mount questioned his authority and rejected him. The Jews believed the Temple Mount was holy, in and of itself. The temple and the sacrificial system were symbolic of Jesus and his sacrifice. The glory of God had departed the Temple Mount, and it hovered over the Mount of Olives many centuries before the ministry of Jesus. One day the glory will return, but it will be after Jesus Christ descends to the sixth mountain of Matthew (Mount of Olives). When Jesus stands on the Mount of Olives, it will split into two sections. This act allows the people of Israel a path to safety, but it signals the enactment of judgment on Satan and all who oppose God. The glory will return when the truth proclaimed by Jesus on the seventh mountain in Matthew is manifested over all the earth.

The temple was at the center of Jewish religious and cultural life. The services and sacrifices were necessary for the Jews to worship God. Matthew reveals Jesus to be the Messiah of Israel. Jesus, on seven mountains, is shown to be the true ark and the temple of God. The earthly temple was destroyed a generation later, as predicted by Jesus in Matthew. Since the temple no longer existed, the law became the center of Jewish religious life. The sacrifices required in the temple services were symbolic of the great sacrifice of Jesus at the cross. Most Jews failed to see that Jesus had fulfilled the law. After the one perfect sacrifice, there was no need for any other sacrificial offerings by men.

The greatest opposition to Jesus’s ministry came from the religious leaders of Israel. The confrontation between Jesus and the officials of the temple is seen in Matthew. The chief priests, scribes, and elders who held authority questioned Jesus’s authority. All the miracles performed by him and the revelations of the love and truth of God could

not assuage their hatred of him. The religious leaders continually plotted against him.

Jesus entered Jerusalem. The crowds put down their garments and palm branches and shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest (Matt.21:9).” He goes to the temple for the last time. He confronts the moneychangers who were defiling the house of God. He confronts the religious elites and exposes their hypocrisy with his divine wisdom. The religious leaders were blind to the fact that the true Temple was in their midst. The children see the miracles. They began to cry and proclaim Hosanna to the Son of God.

In Jesus’s day, the temple was an architectural masterpiece. Historical records tell us of its beauty and splendor. Just as the harlot of Revelation 17 is a contrast of wonder and evil and caused John to marvel, so also the temple. The disciples were amazed at its appearance, but Jesus knew that it had become full of filth. The temple had become the house of the religious hypocrites. The beauty and splendor of its outward appearance hid the spiritual decay that was within. The Pharisees and Sadducees had turned the house of God into a congregation of thieves.

The temple became desecrated through sin and rebellion. Jesus saw the spiritual decay that had preceded the physical destruction in 70 AD. Israel marveled over the physical structure of stone but rejected the true temple. Jesus foretold of the temple’s destruction many years before it was destroyed. Jesus also revealed the impending death and resurrection of the true Temple of God.

The hypocritical religious leaders followed the letter of the law but not the heart of the law. The heart of the law was to love God above all and to love their neighbors as themselves. The Jews were not chosen because of their greatness. They were specially selected by grace to receive God’s truth and blessings. Rather than being humbled by such a gracious gift, the Jewish leaders became self-righteous and full of pride.

Many of the religious leaders practiced a false religion. False worship does not always equate to pagan worship. False worship arises when the

truth of God is perverted. The Lord had given the law to turn the people toward him, but the religious leaders used it to justify their greed. Many of their interpretations of the law were strained and bizarre. They turned the law into absurd stipulations and twisted its meaning for their benefit. They perverted the purpose of the law.

The temple had been the place where God dwelled and the place where the glory of God was manifested. He will not dwell where wickedness abounds. The site of the temple was no longer symbolic of the divine authority, for the presence and glory of God had long departed. In a stinging rebuke of the religious leaders, Jesus stated, “You belong to your father the devil (John 8:44).” Significantly, Jesus did not choose to celebrate the Passover at the temple. Jesus chose to celebrate the Passover with his disciples.¹⁵⁹

Jesus went to the temple. He confronted the religious elites and leaves for the last time. Weber points out that Matthew used the Greek verb *kataleipo*, which means *to leave behind*. He asserts that in using the verb *kataleipo*, there is the implication of deliberate action and purpose in his departure from the temple. Jesus had condemned those who had perverted biblical truth and desecrated the holy site. Weber concludes that Jesus’s departure was a complete condemnation of the religious leaders of Israel.¹⁶⁰ Jesus, the true Temple, had replaced the structure of stone.

God is not finished dealing with his people, his nation, and his mountains. It is through the very Son of God and through the New Covenant that Israel will receive all the blessings that have been promised to righteous Israel. The Jews believe the Messiah will rebuild the temple and restore the boundaries of Israel. The Antichrist will do this to deceive many in Israel and cause them to accept that he is the Messiah. The holy mount has been desecrated in the past, and it will witness desecration in the future.

We believe the temple will be rebuilt, and blood sacrifices for sin will once again be offered. Before the cross, the people were obedient in demonstrating their faith in God by offering animal sacrifices. God had promised that he would provide the ultimate sacrifice. The offering of

blood sacrifices after the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is an abomination. The book of Hebrews tells us there is no more sacrifice for sin after the Lamb of God offered the only acceptable sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins. They were just a temporary covering until the only acceptable sacrifice was to be offered. Some believe that future offerings for sins by Jews in a rebuilt temple will be by the will of God. This is nothing less than blasphemy.

Satan had desired to sit on the Mount of the Congregation in the recesses of the north (Isa. 14:13-14.) Some believe the mount of assembly also alludes to Mount Zion. The statement by Satan is also about his quest to rule in place of God, not just in heaven but also on the earth.¹⁶¹ A created being had sought to place himself above his Creator. Satan had reasoned that to rule, he had to ascend to the holy mount of God. He never ascended the mount to raise his throne above the stars of God and “be like the Most High.” Instead, he was cast as profane from the holy mount and lost his position of spiritual authority in heaven.

Satan will enact a similar grand scheme of rebellion in the future. There is to be a future desecration of the Temple Mount. In the last days, he will be cast down to earth. He will possess the body of the Antichrist. He will help to rebuild the temple. He will ascend the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. He will enter the temple and demand to be worshiped. This is the best he can do, and he can only do this because God will allow it.

The throne of Israel belongs to God. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem belongs to God. The successive empires that ruled over Israel and her mountains could never change this truth. God has always been and will always be the Lord over all his creation. There is an intimate relationship between the seven mountains of Matthew and the Temple Mount. The glory of God will once again be present at the Temple Mount when Jesus returns.

8



The Mountain Symbol and Kingdoms Ruled by Men

Some do not believe the seven mountains of Revelation symbolize actual mountains. They believe that mountains in the Bible are commonly used to symbolize kingdoms under the rule of men. They contend the seven mountains and seven kings both represent dominant empires.¹⁶² They refer to seven great world powers as “seven mountain-kings.”¹⁶³ Others believe the seven mountains symbolize earthly kingdoms, and the kings symbolize the rulers of these kingdoms. We believe the seven mountains point to seven actual mountains, and the seven kings in Revelation 17 symbolize seven empires that arise to rule over the mountains.

Making the symbols of the “mountains” and “kings” to stand for the same thing (earthly kingdoms) certainly makes one’s interpretation of Revelation 17 easier. Unfortunately, this path will not lead us to the

truth. Those who take this route fail to give an adequate answer concerning the redundancy. They seemingly ignore all the biblical truths associated with the mountains throughout the Bible. There is simply no biblical justification for claiming the symbols “mountains” and “kings” both represent world kingdoms.

Are mountains commonly used in the Bible to symbolize earthly kingdoms under the control of earthly rulers? First and foremost, the mountain is used to symbolize the power and authority of a spiritual kingdom. Without a doubt, a mountain in the Bible is used to symbolize a spiritual kingdom. Without a doubt, the mountain in the Bible symbolizes spiritual rule, authority, and dominion over the kingdoms of the earth. To answer the question of whether the mountain in the Bible is commonly used to symbolize a kingdom under the rule of men, we need to look at all the passages cited to support this view. We will look at Psalm 30:7, 46:2, 65:6, 68:15-16; Isaiah 2:2-3, 41:15-16; Jeremiah 51:25; Ezekiel 35:3; Daniel 2:35; Amos 6:1; Habakkuk 3:6; and Zechariah 4:7.

Isaiah 2:2-3 and Daniel 2:35 are cited most often. “And it will come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the tops of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.” “And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord for Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3).” “Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35).

Both Isaiah 2:2-3 and Daniel 2:35 look forward to a time in the future when God’s kingdom will depose the rule of men. These passages refer to the righteous rule of God and his Son over the earth. It is ridiculous to apply these passages as evidence that mountains symbolize

earthly kingdoms under the rule of evil men. These mountains represent the exact opposite. These passages are continually cited and added to a list of biblical passages where a mountain is mentioned in association with a kingdom to bolster their claim. These passages add no credence at all to their assertion. These passages serve to highlight the weakness of their interpretation.

If the mountain in the Bible symbolized an earthly kingdom under the rule of man, then surely this would be shown in the book of Daniel and the book of Matthew. However, this is not what we find. Daniel reveals the rise and fall of successive empires throughout history from Babylon until the time the King of Kings returns to earth to rule and reign. In the book of Daniel, empires/kingdoms ruled by men are not symbolized by mountains. The successive empires are symbolized by different metals and clay in chapter two. They are symbolized by different beasts in chapter seven. In chapter eight, Medes-Persia is symbolized by a ram, and Greece, under Alexander, is symbolized by a he-goat. After Alexander died, the Greek Empire split into four divisions. These kingdoms are symbolized by four horns.

There is only one kingdom symbolized by a mountain in Daniel. The empires revealed in Daniel are crushed by a stone, which becomes a great mountain that covers the whole earth. This is the kingdom of the Messiah. Is the kingdom of the Messiah considered just another earthly kingdom? The kingdoms of man, under the influence of evil principalities, rise and flourish for a time. They then fall by the power of another kingdom or from the decay within. The kingdom depicted in Daniel 2:35 is eternal. This mountain in Daniel symbolizes the righteous and glorious kingdom to come that will be under the rule of the King of Kings.

Mountains are very prominent in the book of Matthew. Do the mountains in Matthew refer to worldly kingdoms? In the book of Matthew, it is when Jesus is on the mountains that the “significance and nature of His mission are most clearly seen.” The mountains of Matthew “function not primarily as places of revelation or isolation, but

as eschatological sites where Jesus enters into the full authority of His Sonship, where the eschatological community is gathered, and where the age of fulfillment is inaugurated.”¹⁶⁴ The mountains of Israel are associated with an eternal and glorious spiritual kingdom. At the end of this age, the rule and law of God will go forth from Israel.

Kingsbury believes the mountains of Matthew are associated with the Kingship and Sonship of Christ.¹⁶⁵ Many others have noted the relationship between Israel and God is closely associated with Mount Sinai and Mount Zion. The ultimate conflict depicted in Revelation is one between two spiritual kingdoms. The conflict between Satan and his followers and Christ and his people at the end of this age is at a place referred to as a mountain.

A passage often cited by those who claim the mountains in Revelation 17 symbolize earthly kingdoms ruled by men is Psalm 30:7. David writes, “Lord by thy favour, Thou didst make my mountain to stand strong.” The assertion is that when David writes “my mountain,” he is referring to Israel as his kingdom. Was Israel God’s kingdom, or did it belong to the earthly rulers of Israel?

Israel is unique among all the kingdoms and nations of the world.¹⁶⁶ No one can deny that the tribes of Israel and the nation of Israel are intimately connected to mountains. God calls the mountains of Israel his mountains. The Promised Land is spoken of as “the patrimony of Israel.” God chose Israel to settle in this land. It is also called the “patrimony of Yahweh,” which makes it clear that this land above all belongs to God. Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will live with them.” The book of Ezekiel reveals that the throne of God is in the midst of Israel forever (Ezek. 43:7).

God is the real King of Israel. He chose David as his earthly agent to rule as king over Israel. This truth is revealed throughout the Psalms, which is ascribed as written by King David. Not grasping this most important truth has caused untold misery to those empires and rulers who oppressed and attacked Israel. Psalm 110 is believed to contain divine oracles made to a king on the day he is enthroned. One concerns

an oath made by Yahweh. “You are a priest forever, in the succession of Melchizedek.” “The following verse speaks of the dominion of this king over his enemies and says the Lord is at your right hand. When this king is invited to sit at the right hand of Yahweh, then it points to the fact that Yahweh is the real king. The king addressed by Yahweh is a co-regent. The royal lordship of Yahweh is seen in Psalm 2.”¹⁶⁷

Jesus, in contending with the Pharisees, referred to Psalm 110 to demonstrate that the Messiah is greater than David and that David recognized this truth. Goliath called the soldiers of Israel the servants of Saul, but when David hears the boasting of Goliath, he stated, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” David did not refer to the soldiers of Israel as the armies of Saul; he called them the armies of God. If Israel’s army belongs to God, the kingdom of Israel also belongs to God. David understood that God was the true King of Israel.

Since the mountains in the Bible are associated with the rule, power, authority, and provisions of God, what does David mean by “my mountain”? Barnes believes the “mountain” symbolized the source of David’s security and strength since the mountains had been used to signify a place of security and refuge (Ps. 18:1-2, 18:33, 27:5). Barnes asserts the mountain cannot be symbolic of Mount Moriah or Mount Zion. These two mountains are connected to the throne of Israel and the kingdom of Israel. The passage speaks of an earlier time when David did not rule over them.¹⁶⁸ Barnes states, “he speaks of himself as having, through the favor of God, put himself into a strong position—a position where he feared no enemy and no change; where he thought himself entirely secure—the state of ‘prosperity’ to which he had referred in the previous verse.” The Lord revealed to David that there was no real security apart from him. No amount of wealth, power, or prestige can give one real security because it can all vanish in an instant. There is only security in the favor, grace, and mercy of God.¹⁶⁹

David knew that he was a chosen representative to rule over Israel, which was God’s kingdom. David knew there was a greater king.

The phrase “my mountain” did not pertain to an earthly kingdom that David called his own. It pointed to the source of David’s protection and security. He knew God had chosen him. Therefore, he was under the authority and protection of God. The mountain symbolized David’s foundation and David’s refuge. David calls God “my rock, my savior, and the rock of Israel.” Some have seen the high and lofty mountain in Ezekiel 17:22 as pointing to the Messiah. David knew that he ruled by the power and the will of God and that the very throne of heaven on the mount of God sustained him as the chosen servant of God.

Others point to Psalm 68:15-16 to support their claim. “The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan. Why leap ye, ye high hills? This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it forever” (KJV). The ERV translation refers to Mount Bashan as a great mountain with many high peaks. This translation asks why Mount Bashan is jealous of Mount Zion, which is the place that God has chosen to dwell forever.¹⁷⁰ Many believe this Mount Bashan is another name for Mount Hermon, which lies to the north of Bashan.

JFB states, “Mountains are often symbols of nations (Ps. 46:2, 65:6). That of Bashan, northeast of Palestine, denotes a heathen nation, which is described as a ‘hill of God,’ or a great hill. Such are represented as envious of the hill (Zion) on which resides.”¹⁷¹ The two passages cited do not compare mountains to nations. Psalm 46:2-3 reads, “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed and thou the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” Psalm 65:6-7 reads, “Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; being girded with power; Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.” A mountain is not equated to a nation in these passages.

In Psalm 68:15-16, Mount Zion is being contrasted with Mount Bashan (Hermon). Many throughout history have looked to the hills of Rome as emblematic of power and rule, but they are only molehills

to God. Was Mount Bashan a symbol of world power? This mountain was noted for its fruitfulness rather than military or political power. This mount was associated with fertile ground and plentiful livestock that produced food for the people.

This passage points to the truth of Isaiah 55:8, which reads, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.” Most would consider Mount Hermon to be more majestic than Mount Zion. What men consider great cannot be compared with what God considers great. The whole world belongs to God. He could have chosen any site on the earth as his dwelling place. Mount Zion was not very high. By man’s reasoning, it was not as great as others. The reasoning and wisdom of men are faulty. The mountain of the Lord may not be as high or grand as other mountains. It is more glorious and magnificent than all others because God has chosen it above all other places. Though its natural qualities may not be easily defended, it is the fact that God has chosen it that makes it more formidable than all other mountains. Mount Zion is preeminent because the Lord is present.

The next citing is Isaiah 41:15-16, “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.” Some claim that the mountains symbolize powerful kingdoms, and the hills symbolize lesser kingdoms who are the enemies of Israel. They contend that this passage speaks of Israel threshing the nations.

J. A. Alexander, in his classic commentary on Isaiah, echoes the belief of others concerning Isaiah 41:15-16. “There seems to be no ground for the common assumption that hills and mountains are specific emblems here for States or governments. The image presented is the strange but strong one of a downtrodden worm reducing hills to powder, the essential idea being that a weak and helpless object overcoming the most

disproportionate obstacles, by strength of another.”¹⁷² Here, the worm symbolizes Israel, and the strength needed comes from God.

In Deuteronomy 12:2, God speaks to the Israelites, “Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills and under every green tree.” The mountains and hills did not symbolize the “nations” or “kings” that Israel defeated. They were associated with the idolatry of the nations, for the pagans built their altars on the mountains and hills, where they sacrificed to their gods (Hos.4:13; Jer. 3:6, 21, 23; Isa. 57:7). The Holy Spirit explicitly mentions the nations twice and the princes and rulers of the world in Isaiah 40. God uses the mountain and hill in Isaiah 40:4 to symbolize obstacles. He mentions explicitly nations (twice), kings, and rulers in Isaiah 41. However, we are to believe that in Isaiah 41:15-16, he speaks of the nations symbolically.

How does Isaiah 41:15-16 relate to the overall message of chapter 41 and the surrounding chapters? These chapters promise God’s protection and preservation for those who obey him but speak against idolatry. We believe the mountains and hills symbolize obstacles to righteous Israel, whether physical or spiritual. What are the obstacles before righteous Israel? Indeed, evil people who oppose Israel can be viewed as obstacles, but they are the earthly agents of dark spiritual forces. Behind all obstacles before the people of God, we find Satan and evil principalities. Satan attacked Israel from without and within. Many overlook the enemy within. It was rebellious and idolatrous Israel that caused kingdoms to rise to become the head over Israel, including the righteous.

God had ordained that righteous Israel would be the “head” of all nations. He promised Israel if she obeyed him, no kingdom could stand before her. If Israel disobeyed, then kingdoms would arise to be the head over her. The kingdom of Babylon rose to prominence and became the instrument of punishment in the hand of God. Who caused Babylon to rise to prominence? It was rebellious and idolatrous Israel, under the influence of dark spiritual forces, who forsook the Lord and worshiped pagan gods.

It was the mountains and hills where the people of Israel worshiped and sacrificed to idols. God is stating that he will tear down all obstacles before those who obey him and seek to accomplish his will. God will tear down the sites of idolatry and will use the righteous remnant of Israel to remove this sin from the people. In Isaiah 42:15, God declares, “I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools.” Hosea 10:8 reads, “The high places of wickedness will be destroyed—it is the sin of Israel. Thorns and thistles will grow up and cover their altars. Then they will say to the mountains, ‘Cover us!’ and to the hills, ‘Fall on us!’”

Jehoram “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (2 Kings 8:18). “He also built high places on the hills of Judah and had caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and had led Judah astray (2 Chron. 21:11).” Jehoram introduced Baal worship and had pagan altars constructed upon the high places. He also made the people take part in these abominations. “Surely the idolatrous commotion on the hills and mountains is a deception; surely in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel” (Jer. 3:23). “Even the children remember their altars and Asherah poles beside the spreading trees and on the high hills” (Jer. 17:2). In Hosea 4:13, God declares, “They sacrificed on the mountaintops and burned offerings on the hills, under oak, poplar, and terebinth, where the shade is pleasant. Therefore, your daughters turn to prostitution and your daughters-in-law to adultery.”

The Israelites went into captivity in Babylon because of their disobedience and idolatry. Paul tells us that when someone sacrificed to idols, they were sacrificing to demons. Likewise, those who worshiped idols were worshipping demons. It was on the “high places” (the mountains and hills of Israel) where these abominations took place. The threshing of the mountains and making the hills as chaff is viewed as the removal of idolatry from the people. Moses had commanded the people to destroy the Canaanite altars on the high hills (Exod. 32:13; Deut. 12:2-3). Josiah also tore down the pagan altars. All speak of grinding these pagan objects to fine dust, reminiscent of the ‘chaff’ of our passage.”¹⁷³

We can understand the meaning of the mountains and hills of Isaiah 42:14-17 by comparing this passage with Isaiah 65:6-8. In Isaiah 42, God states, “For a long time I have kept silent.” In Isaiah 65, God states, “I will not keep silent.” In both passages, he speaks against idolaters but also promises not to forsake all of Israel. Isaiah 42 reveals that God will lay waste to the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation. Many of the pagan gods were associated with fertility and plentiful harvests. Dagon was a fertility god that was believed to provide good crops and grain. Likewise, Nikkal-wa-lb was thought to be the goddess of bountiful fruit.

The Lord tells us why he speaks judgment against the mountains and hills in Isaiah 65. Idolatrous Israel “burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me upon the hills.” Likewise, Ezekiel 6:2-4 reads, “Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them and say: You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord. This is what the Sovereign Lord says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you and I will destroy your high places. Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people in front of your idols.”

The mountains and hills in Isaiah 41 should be viewed as symbolic of obstacles before Israel. The chief impediments keeping Israel from receiving the blessings of God and from being the “head” of all nations was not some enemy kingdom. The Bible reveals that if Israel was obedient, no kingdom could stand against her. The real obstacle was rebellious and idolatrous Israel that worshiped idols.

The time of captivity in Babylon helped to purge idolatry from the people. The remnant that returned to Jerusalem did not engage in the evil practices of their pagan neighbors. There would still be those in Israel who would sin against God and disobey him, but the worship of pagan gods had been removed from them when the remnant returned from Babylon. The name Satan comes from a Hebrew verb that means

*to oppose or obstruct.*¹⁷⁴ The real enemy of righteous Israel is Satan and his evil principalities.

Another passage cited to show that the mountain in the Bible is symbolic of an earthly kingdom under the rule of man is found in Jeremiah. “So the Lord in his threat against the throne and power of Babylon said: I am against thee, O destroying mountain, which destroyest all the earth; and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and will roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain (Jer. 51:25).” This cannot be about ancient Babylon, for this empire never destroyed the whole world. Ancient Babylon was never burned as a mountain. This Babylon is to receive divine judgment in “the day of the Lord.” This day is always revealed as a time in the future. This judgment is also associated with cosmic changes revealed in Matthew 24:29. These cosmic changes take place at the end of this age.¹⁷⁵

In Isaiah 14, God speaks of the king of Babylon. Isaiah 14:1-11 refers to a historical king of Babylon. Isaiah 14:12-19 is not referring to an earthly king. There are things said about this king of Babylon that can apply to only Satan. He is the king of the great city called Babylon at the end of this age. The same Hebrew expression “destroying mountain” is used about one of the seven mountains of Matthew. This exact expression is found in 2 Kings 23:13 and is used about the Mount of Olives. It is translated as the *mount of corruption*. The word used for corruption also means destruction. The Babylon of Jeremiah 51:25 will be ruled by Satan who will possess the body of the Antichrist. The phrase “destroying mountain” ultimately symbolizes the direct rule of Satan on the earth at the end of this age. It is a stretch to use this passage in support of the belief that a mountain in the Bible symbolizes a kingdom under the rule of men.

Ezekiel 35:3 reads, “Behold Mount Seir, I am against thee... and I will make thee desolate.” The Holy Spirit is referring to a mountainous region. Esau settled in the area of Mount Seir. This area was known as Edom, and the descendants of Esau were called Edomites. Obadiah also refers to Edom as the mountain of Esau. God condemns Edom for its

treatment of Israel. The message here is very similar to the message in Amos 6:1. About Edom, God declares that those who live on the “clefts of the rock” and live on the high mountain are not beyond the hand of his judgment.

In the previous passages of Scripture are the references to the mountains symbolic of earthly kingdoms? We see the statements about mountains are merely describing the natural topography of these kingdoms. The references are to actual mountains. The mountain is not used symbolically of all kingdoms. The mountain is used symbolically of a false foundation and a false sense of security. It points to the arrogance and ignorance of men. The message is quite clear that there is no secure place for those who oppose God and his people. No matter how strong and secure one thinks their earthly position or dwelling, there is no refuge from the judgment of God.

In Amos 6:1, the prophet calls for the Israelites that are at ease in Zion not to put their trust in the Mount of Samaria. Samaria was in a mountainous region. The two well-known mountains were Gerizim and Ebal. History reveals that Samaria was a well-fortified city. The mention of the mountain in connection to Samaria is describing the geography of the region that provided better protection from an attack by an enemy. This gave people a sense of security.

God is warning the people not to put their trust in the things of this world for their protection. The Bible reveals that people should put their faith in the Lord. When the Bible mentions the Nile in association with the ancient empire of Egypt, are we then at liberty to say a river symbolizes a kingdom in the Bible? Likewise, there is no justification for using this passage to claim that a mountain is symbolic of an earthly kingdom under the control of an earthly ruler.

Some also see the Mount of Samaria as symbolic of a false foundation. Samaria was in the area of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. After the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom went into captivity in Assyria, foreigners were sent to live in the region. These foreigners intermarried with the people of Israel still living there. At first, these foreigners

worshipped pagan gods only, but the seventeenth chapter of 2 Kings reveals the Samaritans eventually practiced a religion incorporating Judaism and idolatry. The Samaritans just acknowledged the Pentateuch as the Word of God, and they built their temple on Mount Gerizim. The Jews looked down on the Samaritans because of their pagan background and considered their religion an idolatrous perversion of the truth of God. The Samaritan's foundation, like David's, should be the heavenly mount.

Habakkuk 3:6 reads, "He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting." God refers to the kingdoms of the world in this passage, but he refers to them as "the nations," not as mountains. History proves that the kingdoms of man are not perpetual or everlasting. Habakkuk 3:10 reads, "The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high." We believe the mountains in this passage point to evil powers.

In Zechariah, Zerubbabel was given the task to build the temple of God. He faced much opposition, but his real enemies were the spiritual forces of evil. Zechariah 4:7 reads, "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." The mountain before Zerubbabel was not an actual mountain. It was a symbol of the forces opposed to the servant of God carrying out the work and will of God. The people opposing him were merely the physical agents of evil forces. *Beelzebul/Beelzebub* is one of the names of Satan. It comes from the Hebrew name *Baalzebub* (*lord of the flies*). Some believe this word may have been an alteration of the Canaanite *Baalzebul* (*lord of the high place*).¹⁷⁶ We are told the mountain opposing Zerubbabel will become level ground. God will defeat and punish all powers and principalities that seek to resist his will and plan for his people.

What did Jesus mean when he spoke about the moving of mountains in Matthew? Was Jesus referring to nations? The phrase "moving

mountains” is found in ancient Jewish writings and was used by rabbis to symbolize accomplishing something thought to be impossible.¹⁷⁷ The “moving of a mountain” is a metaphor for accomplishing a very challenging task or removing some significant obstacle. Jesus used the phrase in this sense. What are the most significant impediments to Christians in carrying out the work of the Lord? They are the dark spiritual forces whose goal is to thwart the plan and work of God. Evil nations, kings, and people are merely the physical agents of these evil powers.

The passages of Scripture cited do not support the belief that a mountain is commonly used to symbolize the kingdoms of the world under the control of men. We contend that the mountain symbol first and foremost points to spiritual rule. That is why the book of Daniel refers to the world only under the rule of God’s chosen King, Jesus Christ, as a great mountain. Babylon is called a “destroying mountain.” This is a reference to Babylon the Great. Her foundations are satanic principalities. Her true king is Satan.

Many have failed to grasp the biblical meaning of the mountain symbol in the Bible. They equate the mountains and kings to symbolize human governmental rule. They fail to see that through the seven mountains and seven kings, God is not only revealing the manifestation of satanic control over the kingdoms of the earth but also the hierarchy of evil rule. Many people today would scoff at the assertion of the relationship between political rulers and spiritual powers. This was not the case with ancient men. It was indeed not the case with those living in the first century. It is vitally important for us to acknowledge the fact that the Word of God clearly shows the influence of spiritual powers in the affairs of the nations of the world.

9



The Seven Hills of Rome Myth

For centuries many have believed that Rome is the obvious answer to the identity of Babylon the Great. They point to the fact that Rome had been the enemy and persecutor of the early Church. They believed the seven mountains of Revelation 17 refer to Rome because it was called the “City of the Seven Hills.” They claimed the seven kings symbolize seven emperors of Rome. The Rome interpretation became popular after the Reformation. Some go so far to state that no doubt can be entertained about this interpretation.¹⁷⁸ There are still many today who believe and promote the Rome interpretation.

The proponents of the Rome interpretation cite the words of pagan Roman poets and the inscriptions on Roman coins to support their claim. Can there be a weaker foundation for interpreting such a crucial prophetic chapter? This path will never lead us to the truth. What would be the result if this method of interpretation was used to interpret

other passages in the Bible? The Word of God would be distorted and perverted. Since the foundation of the Rome interpretation is founded on the words of pagans, and not the Word of God, Christians should have much doubt. The best refutation of the Rome interpretation is the Bible. Over the last century, many notable Bible scholars have rejected the belief that the city of Rome is the Babylon of Revelation 17 because of the lack of biblical support.

Why do many people continue to believe Rome is the “great city” of Revelation 17? Seiss gives us the answer. There is no biblical support for the Rome interpretation. The ones who offer this interpretation do so because they have nothing better to offer. If the Rome interpretation is the best someone can put forth, it would be better to leave the subject alone entirely.¹⁷⁹ There is probably not a weaker foundation for a biblical interpretation.¹⁸⁰

The truth and wisdom of God are not known through the words of pagan men, nor by the majority consent of men. The cardinal rule of biblical interpretation is not hard to understand. We should interpret the Bible from the Bible. No other written or spoken words are needed. It is the only source of truth uncorrupted by the minds of men. To understand God’s perfect truth, we must turn to the very source of this truth. “The law of the Lord is perfect” (Psalm 19:7). If the Bible is the source and foundation for our interpretation of the seven mountains and seven kings, we must show how these mountains and kings are revealed elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Those who believe the mountains and kings symbolize Rome and its emperors ignore the fact that the mountains in the Bible are associated with spiritual revelations, spiritual authority, and spiritual power. One could search throughout the Bible and would never find any mention of the Seven Hills of Rome or a distinct group of seven emperors. On this fact alone, the Rome interpretation fails. Those who claim the seven mountains are the hills of Rome are not using history as proof of prophetic fulfillment. They are interpreting the Bible based on words spoken by pagans centuries before. The words of men make up the

foundation of the Rome interpretation. Any interpretation founded on such a foundation should be rejected.

Rome has been considered the obvious answer to the identity of Mystery Babylon by the reasoning of many. The statement of the angel about wisdom is a warning not to look to the wisdom of men. What men consider apparent is often wrong.¹⁸¹ We need the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to understand the truth of Revelation 17.

If the hills of Rome were the mountains where Mystery Babylon sits, one would think that these hills would be uniquely associated with the judgment of God in the Bible. Jesus and the Bible are silent concerning the hills of Rome. The Bible has much to say about a distinct group of seven mountains that are intimately associated with the proclamation of God's kingdom by the Son of God. To enact judgment on Satan, his kingdom, and the kingdoms of the world, Jesus will not return to the hills of Rome. Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives.

There has been a false assumption propagated by many about the seven mountains of Revelation 17 for a long time. This incorrect assumption has been responsible for many erroneous interpretations. Some take the path of Nicodemus when interpreting the seven mountains. The popular belief is that Mystery Babylon symbolizes a city that is built on seven mountains/hills. The symbolism given in Revelation 17 does not support this belief. Biblical symbolism refutes this assumption.

Many consider the phrase "City of Seven Hills" as the defining description of Rome. The geographical features of a city are innately part of the city. This fact pertains to any locale, whether we are talking about the hills of Rome, the mountains of Rio de Janeiro, or the geographical features of any other city on earth. If the seven mountains were the hills of Rome or a group of mountains in some other city, then they would be innately part of the city. This creates a big problem for the Rome interpretation. The Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion. The Bible reveals that the mountains do not belong to the city (harlot). The seven mountains are found on the seven heads of the beast and therefore belong to the beast, not the city (harlot).¹⁸² A beast in the Bible is symbolic

of a kingdom. The long-standing practice of contriving mountains or hills in a city to identify Mystery Babylon is an exercise in futility that has no biblical foundation. The belief that the great harlot called Mystery Babylon is a city built on seven mountains or seven hills is found in the words of men, not the Word of God.

Rather than contriving mountains or hills in a city, we need to look to the Bible to see how God reveals a distinct group of seven mountains. Rather than looking at hills associated with the political rule of one empire, we need to look for mountains related to the rule over all the earth and the spiritual realm. Instead of looking at contrived lists of Roman rulers, we need to look at successive empires that have ruled over the seven mountains revealed in the Bible.

What does the Bible mean when it states the harlot sits on seven mountains? The Greek word *kathemai* (*to be seated*) can denote sovereignty over the kings and mountains, such as a queen that sits on a throne.¹⁸³ That is in line with what is written in Revelation 18. “How much she glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she sayeth in her heart, I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” (Rev. 18:7). This word is used about God sitting on his throne. It occurs about Jesus sitting on the glory cloud in his return to reign over the earth. It is seen concerning the twenty-four elders who are involved in a role in God’s kingdom (Rev. 4:2, 11:16, 14:14). The rule that the harlot exerts is antithetical to the rule of God and his chosen. The harlot has sovereignty over the kingdoms of the earth, and she sits (established) on a distinct group of seven mountains. The seven mountains must be identified with all the kingdoms of the earth. There is only one distinct group of seven mountains associated with all the kingdoms of the earth. They are the seven mountains of Matthew, not the hills of Rome.

The seven mountains are descriptive of the beast and the seven kings, not the harlot.¹⁸⁴ Since a beast is symbolic of a kingdom, one should not look to find the seven mountains in a city but should look for the mountains in a kingdom. What supports a city is a kingdom. The Bible

contains all the information needed to interpret the beast and its seven heads. We do not need to look to the words of Roman poets! One must look to history to see the fulfillment of a biblical prophecy, but the interpretation of Scripture is made from Scripture.¹⁸⁵

There have been some valid questions raised about the Rome interpretation. John sees the harlot sit on a beast with seven heads, and the location of this vision is in the desert. The setting of the desert in no way fits Rome. What sense can be made of John seeing Rome sitting upon the hills of Rome since there was never a time Rome existed apart from its hills? The Roman Empire was built upon Rome. What sense can be made of John seeing Rome sit upon the Roman Empire? “The seven heads are more clearly an aspect of the beast rather than of Babylon.” “Since their first appearance in 12:3 and later in 13:1, 3, they had been inseparable from the description of the dragon and his agent, the sea-beast.”¹⁸⁶ The seven heads are present on the beast and the dragon, but we do not see a harlot. The dragon with seven heads in Revelation 12 points to Satan.

Miner points out that John makes a distinction between God’s punishment of Babylon (Rev. 18:1-19:1) from the punishment that falls upon the beast and the kings (Rev. 19:19-21). He contends this would not make any sense if Rome is (Babylon), the beast (is the Roman Empire), and the kings (are the emperors of the Roman Empire living in Rome) since they all refer to the same historical entity.¹⁸⁷

The truth of the symbolism given in Revelation 17 highlights the fallacy of the Rome interpretation. The beast and the harlot symbolize two different things. The beast will be aligned with ten horns. These ten horns symbolize ten kings, or nations, that give their allegiance to the beast. The beast and the ten horns will hate the harlot. We are told that the ten horns will make the harlot desolate and will destroy her with fire. What are we to make of the idea that the Roman Empire, including the rulers of Rome, will hate the capital city of their empire, although they are themselves residing in Rome?¹⁸⁸ If the beast is the Roman Empire

and the harlot is Rome, we have the ridiculous picture of the empire destroying its own seat of power.

The harlot sits on the heads of the beast, and these heads are full of blasphemies. The mountains will also be associated with great blasphemy. Have the hills of Rome or the mountains of Israel been associated with greater blasphemy? Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God from the mountains of Israel. Jesus was revealed as the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. Jesus was revealed to be the King over all things in heaven and earth. What could be more blasphemous and diabolical than for Satan to rule over these same mountains?

What do the hills of Rome have to do with the diabolical nature of the beast?¹⁸⁹ How are the heads of the beast related to great blasphemy? A correct interpretation must show a direct association between a group of seven mountains and great blasphemy. The Bible reveals a direct association of a distinct group of seven mountains not only with the truth, revelations, and the power of God but also blasphemy. Rome never ruled over all the kingdoms of the earth. The seven mountains are intimately associated with the rule over all kingdoms.

In the book of Daniel, beasts symbolize empires under the influence of evil principalities. These empires rule successively over Israel throughout history. In Revelation 17, the beast with seven heads ascends from the abyss. This fact alone should be enough to show that this beast transcends the physical realm. The rule in question also transcends the political rule of one empire. The beast of Revelation 17 symbolizes the rule of successive kingdoms over the “mountains of God” and the “nation of God.” Ultimately, the beast symbolizes satanic rule.

Jesus is coming to put an end to evil rule and to inaugurate the rule over the earth that God ordained for his chosen people. When King Jesus returns to reign in glory, the rule of God will go out from the mountains of Israel. Satan has focused on the mountains of God, not the hills of Rome. He knows something many expositors of Revelation 17 do not. The destiny of the world lies with the mountains of Israel, not the hills of Rome. The seven mounts are found within the area of

the Promised Land, and this is where we will find the great city of Revelation 17.

Those who claim that Rome is the “great city” are not only guilty of employing faulty principles of biblical interpretation, they are also guilty of applying incorrect geography. The claim that the description of the mountains describes Rome misrepresents the facts about this city. Ancient Rome was said to have been built on hills, not mountains. Rome does not contain one mountain. Mountains in the Bible are associated with kingdom authority and power. Revelation speaks of seven mountains. In Revelation, the Greek word *oros* is translated as *mountain* in every other place where it is found.¹⁹⁰

Ancient Rome was called the “City of Seven Hills” by Roman poets. This description is not found in the Bible. Was Rome founded on seven hills? We should have much doubt because the founding of Rome is associated with myths and legends. Roman authorities and writers propagated these myths and legends. Should we believe that Rome was built on seven hills any more than we should accept that Romulus, who by legend founded Rome, was suckled by a she-wolf?

The so-called hills of early Rome were the Cermalus, Palatium, Velia, Cispius, Fagutalis, Oppius, and the Sucusa. The problem is that not all of these were actual hills. The Cermalus, Palatium, and Velia were not separate hills. They were different peaks of the Palatine Hill. Likewise, the Cispius, Fagutalis, and Oppius were three peaks of the Esquiline Hill. It is thought that the Sucusa was the northern part of the Caelian Hill.¹⁹¹ If we go by the above names, one could say that early Rome was founded upon three hills.

Why did they count the different peaks of the same hill as different hills? There seems to have been a concerted effort by the Romans to identify Rome with seven hills. This was due to their superstitious beliefs and their affinity for Greek culture. Ancient men associated number seven with perfection and plenty. That is why we find so many cities in history associated with seven hills or seven mountains. Roman writers and poets also made a deliberate effort to link Rome with the ancient Greek

Empire. In ancient Greece, the number seven was also very significant. The Greeks associated this number with mystical qualities.

First-century Rome was also said to be on seven hills. The list includes the Capitoline, Palatine, Aventine, Caelian, Quirinal, Esquiline, and Viminal. While the different peaks of the Palatine and Esquiline Hills were counted as different hills concerning early Rome, they are not counted as separate hills in the first century. Throughout history, Rome has been associated with many hills. The Pincian Hill is to the north, and the Janiculum Hill is to the west. To the northwest, there is also the well-known Vatican Hill.

Rome was associated with more than seven hills at the time Revelation was written. Historical records reveal there have been different lists of hills related with Rome throughout history. The Janiculum became prominent during the time of Augustus. Some include it among the seven while deleting another hill.¹⁹² Why would they remove a hill when they added another hill to their list? The belief that Rome sits on seven hills is a contrivance of the Romans. No matter how many hills came into play concerning Rome, people still desired to keep the poetic phrase “City of Seven Hills.”

Men have given cities descriptive names for centuries to promote them. Rome, the City of Seven Hills, is an ancient poetic slogan. This ancient poetic description is like the present-day chamber of commerce slogans. It is a sad fact that this is the foundation of some of the interpretations of the seven mountains and seven kings. The hills of Rome are associated with myths, legends, and superstitions. This is hardly a sound theological foundation for interpreting one of the most important passages in the Bible.

Holland points out that the concept of the Seven Hills of Rome can be traced back to Varro. While the concept of the Seven Hills of Rome may not have originated with him, he propagated and promoted the idea. Elsewhere, not unlike other Romans, he had shown an interest in the groupings of seven, which may have influenced him to associate Septimontium as a name for seven hills. Varro’s discussion of the hills of

Rome shows his confusion: “He has jumbled the names of four regions, of the hills of the pontifical records, and those of the “Servian” great hills; he has reversed the situation to derive the name of the festival from the place instead of vice versa, as is generally agreed.” Holland puts forth the belief that Varro had misinterpreted *Septimontium* as derived from *septem montes* and therefore “has created the confusion which has made the *Septimontium* one of the standing problems of Roman history and topography.”¹⁹³

Septimontium, as used by the ancient authors, had two distinct meanings. It is the name of a religious festival and the collective name of the villages that celebrated it. Some believe the festival originated with seven villages and not seven hills. Most scholars believe *Septimontium* was never an actual name of Rome. Likewise, there is little support that any town ever had this name. Holland believes the *Septimontium* festival celebrated the *saepti montes* (hills that provided safety). The words *saepire* and *saeptum* were commonly used to refer to an enclosed place that offered protection.¹⁹⁴

The sacrifices during the festival were on just two hills. The Palatium was one of the hills. The Palatium provided the best place to be used by the populace as a fortress and a refuge against attacks. The main road leading to the hills was closed for the holiday. Holland makes an excellent point about this fact. If the *Septimontium* was the feast of the *saepti montes*, then one could understand why there would be a sacrifice made to bless the protective barrier. It would make perfect sense to close the one road which “made a breach in its defense” on the day of the festival. Festus quotes Labeo as listing eight hills associated with the festival.¹⁹⁵ The *Septimontium* is not found in the early imperial calendars.¹⁹⁶

Varro influenced the Roman poet Virgil who popularized the concept of Rome and seven hills, although he never actually names the hills. Other poets likewise were influenced by Virgil. Holland admits that no one denies that the idea of seven hills or the different peaks of hills within the city walls existed at least from the time of Augustus. She points out that there was much disagreement over which seven hills were

meant and the name of these hills. She further points out that there is no proof that a distinct list of seven “Servian hills” had been agreed upon at the time Varro lived. The concept of Rome and its hills in different texts may stem from “the long-established cliché of Rome as a “City of Seven Hills.”¹⁹⁷

The generally accepted list of the Seven Hills of Rome is not found in any ancient Roman writing.¹⁹⁸ Many Bible expositors have said that there is no doubt the mountains of Revelation 17 refer to the hills of Rome. It is quite puzzling that so many base their interpretation of the prophetic Word of God on the statements of ancient Romans since those statements are connected to myths and superstition. Christians should have much doubt concerning the Seven Hills of Rome, especially since there seems to have been much confusion among the Romans throughout history concerning the actual names and number of the hills of Rome. The Rome interpretation is simply untenable.

Propagandists long ago realized if a lie is repeated often, people will begin to believe it. Just because a concept may become well-known does not mean that the concept is factual. It was widely accepted for a very long time throughout history that the earth was flat. Of course, that concept seems humorous and ridiculous to us today. The most important reason why we should reject the Rome interpretation is that these hills are not found in the Bible.

Rome was known as the “City of Seven Hills.” The ancient city of Babylon was known as the “gate of God.” In searching for a way to God, are we to assume this city held the answer? We know this city was the exact opposite. This city was in rebellion against God. The gods they served were evil spirits. Why should we believe when God calls for wisdom in understanding the seven mountains of Revelation 17, we are to look to the words of pagans to know the identity of Mystery Babylon? It would be absurd for people to state that the way to God was through the ancient city of Babylon because pagans referred to it as the “gate of God.” It is no less absurd to interpret the seven mountains of Revelation 17 to be the hills of Rome based on the words of pagan Romans.

Many offer interpretations wrapped in obscurity. Those who believe the kings point to seven Roman emperors devise some obscure formulas (including a few obscure emperors) to arrive at seven specific emperors. There is no biblical foundation for their selection of the emperors. Evidently, the interpreter can pick any seven for any reason. The seven mountains are directly related to the kings, but Rome had many rulers and many emperors.

Since Rome had many emperors, why should we focus on just seven? Neither history nor the Bible reveals any such distinct group. What criteria do we use to arrive at a distinct group of emperors? Which emperor should be the first of the seven and which one is the last? If one believes Revelation was written during the time Nero ruled, there would be fewer than seven emperors. If the book of Revelation was written when Domitian ruled, we would end up with too many emperors. The Roman emperor interpretation has been called “an arithmetical and chronological impossibility.”¹⁹⁹

The solution for some is to count Julius Caesar, but he never had the title of emperor, and there was a time gap between the time he ruled and the reign of Augustus. Others arbitrarily omit the emperors who ruled for a short time. They do not count them because it would adversely affect their interpretation. All the formulas used about the emperors are contrivances dreamed up in the minds of men and have no biblical foundation. The Bible reveals that the understanding of the mountains and kings requires wisdom. Divine wisdom revealed in the Word of God is needed rather than the wisdom of men. The Bible does not speak of a group of seven Roman emperors. There is no listing of different forms of Roman governments.

Is the belief that the kings symbolize the successive rulers of Rome valid considering biblical truth? The word “kingdom” comes from the word “king” and the word “domain.” If one is called a king, he must have a kingdom to rule. Likewise, a kingdom must have a ruler. The symbol king in Revelation 17 can symbolize a kingdom and its ruler. Do the seven kings point to successive rulers of one kingdom or seven

distinct kingdoms? The seven kings are found on the heads of the beast. The book of Daniel answers our question. Three of the beasts in Daniel 7 have one head each. These heads are identified with three distinct kingdoms. The beast that looks like a leopard has four heads, and this beast symbolizes the empire of Alexander the Great that was divided into four kingdoms after his death. The four heads symbolize four different divisions and kingdoms, not the successive rulers of one empire. We should see that the seven heads of the beast in Revelation 17 also are identified with seven empires/kingdoms, not the successive rulers of one empire. What is the biblical justification for interpreting the seven heads of the beast in Revelation 17 and specifically the seven kings to symbolize the successive rulers of Rome?

Revelation 13:18 reads, “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred and threescore and six.” The statement “here is wisdom” is pointing us to the Word of God and the Son of God, not to some ancient pagan name game! It is not surprising that Satan can deceive Christians. What is surprising is that he can deceive Christians with such ridiculous beliefs. Wisdom and understanding come from God, and they are found in the Word of God and the Son of God. That is where we will find the meaning to the number of the beast.

Some claim the number 666 is associated with Emperor Nero. This is a product of contrived grammatical and numerical contortions. They take the name Nero and run it through different languages while assigning numerical values, but it does not work. Next, they add a title and make it Nero Caesar. They take this Latin name and title and change it to Greek. This does not give them the result that they want, but they continue with their scheme. They next transliterate it to Hebrew, but it also does not work. Finally, in apparent frustration, they deliberately use incorrect spelling. They then claim his name and title equals 666.

The transliteration of a name or word from another language into Hebrew can have varying results. In Hebrew, there are different options for the use of vowel letters that contain different numerical values. With

such numerical and grammatical contortions, they could make just about any name and title equal 666. Mounce describes it best: “What is not generally stressed is that this solution asks us to calculate a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, and that with a defective spelling.”²⁰⁰ They pound square pegs into round holes and declare that they fit. The whole affair is a contrived exercise in absurdity. What makes this entire process even more ridiculous is the fact that no one had ever heard of this calculation before 1831. So, the contrived calculation of the number 666 appears some eighteen hundred years after Nero became the dust of the earth.²⁰¹

The beast of Revelation 17 is symbolic of satanic rule. What has been the purpose and goal of Satan? Has he focused on the mountains of Israel or the hills of Rome? What is the theological foundation for believing Satan’s goal has been to rule over the hills of Rome? The Bible reveals that the focus of satanic rule has been the destruction of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel. He has tried to accomplish his goal through successive empires, not through successive Roman emperors. Satan has focused on the mountains of God, not the hills of Rome.

Some claim the Catholic Church is the great harlot that sits on seven hills, but the harlot is called a city and never a religion. The Vatican Hill is not to be found among the so-called early hills of Rome or the seven hills of later Rome. Great blasphemy is associated with the seven mountains of Matthew, but what is the great blasphemy seen with either group of Rome’s hills? The Seven Hills of Rome interpretation is as obscure and arbitrary as the seven emperors of Rome interpretation. Any biblical interpretation that is obscure, arbitrary and nowhere to be found in the Bible should be rejected.

The Roman Empire ruled at the time of John, but the harlot is not called an empire. She rides upon empires. She causes empires to rise and fall. The Roman Empire is but one of many that she has exerted control over. Her rule cannot be explained from books of history or the study of

pagan religions. The Word of God is the only source to explain the rule of the great harlot.

For centuries wise men have believed the seven mountains symbolized Rome. Even with the warning of a need for spiritual wisdom, they looked to the words of men rather than the Word and Wisdom of God. They ignored all the great spiritual truths associated with the mountains in the Bible and looked to hills mentioned in the words of pagan poets. Many claim the Rome interpretation is obvious. How can something that is called a mystery by God and requires “theological and symbolic discernment” be evident to all men?²⁰² Why is there a need for spiritual wisdom to understand something that was common knowledge? Are we to believe that Christians throughout history who adhered to the foundational principles of biblical interpretation believed the Rome interpretation was obvious? Most would not know Galba from grits, and even if they did, there is no biblical reason to believe he represented one of the seven kings.

Did most of the early Church think Mystery Babylon symbolized Rome? Did they believe the seven mountains symbolized the hills of Rome? The belief that Rome symbolizes Mystery Babylon can be traced to the fourth century. There were those in the early Church who held a different interpretation. They believed the seven mountains referred to seven millennia. These mountains pointed to the whole course of world history under the evil rule and God’s plan for the redemption of man and the enactment of judgment against all evil.²⁰³

One day the spies of the chief priests and scribes questioned Jesus about the payment of tribute to Rome to trap him into speaking against Roman authority. Jesus responded by requesting a coin and then asked whose image was on it. The crowd answered and said it was Caesar’s. In Matthew 22:21, Jesus said, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things which are God’s.” The coin belonged to Caesar, but the truths of the Bible and the mysteries contained within it belong to God. Rather than an inscription on a Roman coin or an engraved image of a lady on seven hills, the revelation John

receives begins with another image. John sees one like unto the Son of God in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. The very Son of God is upon seven places God calls a mountain.

Since Rome was the capital city of the dominant empire in the world when John received the revelation, some believe Rome is the great city and the great harlot. Daniel reveals the final kingdom under the rule of the Antichrist is the last of a succession of empires that rule over Israel. The Roman Empire was just one blip on the radar screen of history. Rome ruled for a specific time then faded into ruin, like so many empires that preceded it.

The Bereans told Paul they would search the Scriptures to see if his teachings were in line with biblical truth. One could search the Bible many times over and not find any mention of the Seven Hills of Rome. There is no distinct group of seven emperors. The Rome interpretation is pulled out of thin air. It has no biblical foundation. Some argue that anyone living in the first century would readily perceive that the seven mountains were the Seven Hills of Rome. Are we to believe that all the pagans of Rome could know this mystery, even when the Bible states spiritual wisdom is needed?

Some believe the full understanding of the Rome/Roman emperor interpretation is only possible for the academic elitists. We are to believe one needs to be well educated in Latin, pagan history, pagan religion, faulty geography, and the nuances of Roman Emperor chronology. This will supposedly allow one to decipher which seven out of a significant number of emperors to include in their formula. There is no wisdom needed to arrive at the Rome interpretation. All that is required is to ignore the principles of biblical interpretation and be obsessed with pagan literature.

Men can find seven mountains in almost any place by making a hill into a mountain. They also contrive mountains by counting the different summits of one mountain as different mountains to make their interpretation fit. The cliché of “making a mountain out of a molehill”

has a biblical application when applied to the Rome interpretation and those who contrive mountains in other cities.

Is the argument that anyone living in the first century would automatically associate the seven mountains with the Seven Hills of Rome valid? This belief conflicts with the words of Jesus. The harlot is called a mystery, so we need to see what Jesus said about the mysteries of God. The disciples asked Jesus why he spoke in parables. Jesus said, “Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” What people was Jesus referring to when he said them? Jesus was referring to the rebellious of the world, which included the pagans of Rome. Are we to believe that something God calls a mystery could be known by all the pagans of Rome and all the unbelievers living in the first century? A Christian can discern the wisdom of God while the wise men of the world are confounded by it.

Some claim John used the phrase “seven mountains” to cloak the identity of Rome from the Romans to spare the Church the wrath of Rome. The phrase “seven mountains” was not something John dreamed up. The angel of the Lord gives it to John, but the revelation came from Jesus Christ and the throne of God. If anyone, including the Roman authorities, could easily recognize the mountains as the hills of Rome, how is Rome cloaked? If everyone understood the seven mountains as a reference to Rome, and Rome indeed persecuted the Church, then there was no valid reason to cloak Rome. One cannot say by the description of seven mountains Rome is cloaked then, on the other hand, state anyone living in the first century would have immediately associated the seven mountains with Rome. If the last statement is true, the logic of the first statement is flawed. If the answer to the mountains was so obvious, why are we told of a need for wisdom in understanding it? There is a good reason Rome is not named. Rome is not Mystery Babylon.

Some believe the mountains refer to Rome, but the kings refer to successive empires. How can the harlot be Rome since the Roman Empire ruled for a specific time in history? The above is evidence of how difficult it is to eradicate a false interpretation once it is entrenched.

They realize the kings symbolize successive empires in history and not Roman emperors, but they still hold to the mistaken belief that the mountains symbolize Rome.

The beast with seven heads represents satanic rule through successive empires. These successive empires represent the antithesis to the rule chosen for righteous Israel. Hunt, in his book *A Woman Rides the Beast*, writes, “Two major themes of prophecy run consistently throughout all Scripture: 1) Israel; 2) the Messiah who comes to Israel and through Israel to the world as the Savior of all mankind. Around these two central themes, almost all prophecies revolve.”²⁰⁴ The only mountains intimately associated with Israel, the Messiah, and all the kingdoms of the world are mountains revealed in the Bible, not the hills of Rome. The harlot sits on seven mountains and seven kings. Only one group of mountains is intimately associated with six past empires and will be related to the future empire of the Antichrist.

Some focus on the political rule of empires/kingdoms when interpreting the mountains and kings. They associate the hills of Rome with the rule over kingdoms, but the Roman Empire never ruled the whole world. They, in turn, primarily associate the mountains revealed in Matthew with spiritual matters. There is a tendency to view political authority as entirely separate from spiritual authority. There is no governmental rule that does not have a spiritual foundation. The return of Jesus to the earth is also a “political event.” God’s kingdom will replace the kingdoms of men.²⁰⁵ God will change the governance of the kingdoms of the world forever.

Jesus proclaimed the kingdom with power on the mountains of Israel. This is the same power by which all the kingdoms of the earth will be ruled from the mountains of Israel when the King of Kings returns in glory. Those who only look to the words of pagans to understand something God calls a mystery do not follow the proper principles of biblical interpretation. Those who focus on earthly kings and kingdoms to interpret the beasts’ heads ignore the spiritual foundation of the rule.

The beast with seven heads in Revelation 13 contains the different

features of the beasts in the seventh chapter of Daniel and therefore is a composite of those beasts. The beast with seven heads in the thirteenth chapter and the beast in the seventeenth chapter cannot possibly symbolize merely the Roman Empire.²⁰⁶ These beasts symbolized the empires that rule over Israel and the mountains of God. The beast with seven heads in the thirteenth chapter of Revelation is inseparable from the dragon with seven heads in Revelation 12 and the seven-headed beast in Revelation 17.²⁰⁷ The dragon points to Satan and his kingdom. The book of Daniel should be used to interpret Revelation 17 rather than ideas dreamed up in the minds of men. We should conclude that the seven-headed beast in Revelation 17 symbolizes satanic rule over the mountains of God through successive empires.

The angel tells John he will explain the mystery of the woman and the beast she rides. Angels are powerful spiritual beings who possess great wisdom. The word angel means a messenger. The holy angels are messengers used by God to reveal his truth to his people. An angel explained the truth to John, and we know angels look to the Word of God for truth. When the angel speaks of mountains and kings, we will only be able to understand them from the Bible.

Did the apostle John look to the words of men to understand the wisdom and mysteries of God? There is no record that John or the people he wrote to were knowledgeable about the writings of Roman poets. No documents reveal they were students of Roman emperor chronology. There is no hint in the Bible that we are to turn to the words of pagan men to understand a mystery that requires spiritual wisdom. "All the evidence available supports the conclusion that one factor which dominated John's thinking was the revelatory power of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah."²⁰⁸

The failure to fully understand the meaning of the word "mystery" has led to many unbiblical interpretations about Mystery Babylon. Without any biblical justification, some associate the word *mysterion* with the pagan mystery religions or to the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Many take a giant leap into a theological labyrinth and equate

Mystery Babylon to symbolize the actual religion of ancient Babylon. They realize there must be a commonality shared by all the empires. Since they fail to see that a distinct group of seven mountains is the commonality, they create their own.

The belief that the Catholic Church is the great harlot of Revelation 17 can be traced to the twelfth century. This belief became more prevalent during and after the Reformation.²⁰⁹ There are still those today who believe Mystery Babylon symbolizes the Catholic Church, which sits upon the Seven Hills of Rome. Some refer to the book *The Two Babylons*, which was written by Alexander Hislop to try to demonstrate the religion of Babylon was propagated through successive empires in history until finally residing in Rome and the Catholic Church.²¹⁰ The foundations of many of the interpretations of Mystery Babylon are based on Hislop's book rather than the Bible. Much of the information used to support the premise of this book is a fabrication or exaggeration. Many of the so-called well-known facts were not factual or well-known.²¹¹

The politics, cultures, and religions of the successive empires that ruled over Israel and the seven mountains of Matthew were indeed pagan, but they were also very different. Rome was ruling over Israel at the time John received the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medes-Persia, and Greece had previously ruled over Israel and her mountains. The empire of the Antichrist will rule over these same mountains. The commonality of the successive empires is not some entity that men have created called the Babylonian system. The commonality shared by all the realms is that each ruled over the mountains that were explicitly called God's mountains.

The interpretation that the Mother of Harlots is the ancient religion of Babylon or some Babylonian system is not found in the Bible. Some have accepted Hislop's conclusions without investigation or biblical support. They have been duped into believing this fanciful farce. Since Satan is the author of all false religions, it is not surprising there would be some similarities. There were also significant differences in the beliefs and practices of the religions of the successive empires that ruled over

Israel. One of the central ideas of Egyptian religion was the resurrection of the dead and immortality. The concept of immortality formed the foundation for the religious and cultural life of the Egyptians for centuries. Ringgren states, “The Assyrian and Babylonian texts are relatively silent as regards to the position of mankind after death. Death is the fate of all mankind. The myths attempt to explain, as they do in so many other countries, how it comes about that man must die. The concepts of life after death have a completely negative and pessimistic quality.”²¹²

With the downfall of Babylon, did the religion of Babylon live on after her political rule ended? The Medes and Persians did not assimilate the Babylonian religion. “Religion in Medo-Persia was not tied to the political structure as it was in Babylon, and generally speaking, there was freedom of worship.”²¹³ “The Persians had no images, temples, or altars, and charged the makers of such with madness (Herodotus 1.131); therefore they dashed the Babylonian “images broken unto the ground.”²¹⁴ Greeks later turned to other religions, but at the time Alexander the Great was forming his empire, Greece was more influenced by Greek philosophy and religion than the pagan practices of Babylon.

The Romans believed in and worshiped many gods. They had no central religious beliefs. Romans were very tolerant of different religious practices if it did not challenge the Roman law and the governing authorities of Rome.²¹⁵ Romans borrowed many different religious beliefs and practices of the people they controlled. The religions of the empires that ruled over Israel were indeed all pagan. However, to say that some distinct religious system ruled over them has no biblical or historical basis. All these empires can be classified as part of the “world” in rebellion against God. The systems of the world are to be found in the beast.

A century ago, many renowned biblical scholars believed Rome was the “great city” and the Catholic Church was the great harlot. During the time of the Reformation, those who were locked in a theological battle with the Catholic Church considered their adversary the enemy of biblical truth. They had no problem applying passages about the great harlot to their adversary. To them, the seven mountains were the Seven

Hills of Rome, and the seven kings were the emperors of Rome. Some believe there can be no doubt the harlot is the Roman Church.²¹⁶ There is not a shred of biblical evidence to support this claim.

The angel asks John, “Why didst thou marvel?” The angel seemed surprised that John did not know the identity of the harlot. It is obvious the people symbolized by the harlot existed in John’s day and had existed throughout history. The Catholic Church did not exist at that time. John was familiar with the mountains of Matthew. He had walked with Jesus on these mountains. On these mountains, John had heard the kingdom proclaimed and saw Jesus manifesting the very power of heaven. He saw the very Son of God radiating with the glory of God. He also saw Jesus ascending to heaven from one of these mountains. John knew the history of these mountains and the blasphemy associated with them. He also knew that these mountains were associated with the great cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

Why was the angel surprised that John did not immediately grasp what he had seen and what he was told? If the seven mountains of Revelation 17 are the seven mountains revealed through Jesus in Matthew, then we can understand the angel’s reaction. We are told the harlot reigns over the kingdoms of the earth. This statement refers to all kingdoms. This is not true concerning the Catholic Church or the city of Rome. The Roman Empire, like so many others, flourished for a specific time and then was overthrown. The harlot ruled and reigned long before the Roman Empire or the Catholic Church existed, and her rule continues today.

10



The Biblical Meaning of the Mountain Symbol: A Symbol of the Agents of Spiritual Rule

We know that both God's kingdom and the kingdom of Satan use spiritual and earthly agents. Since the mountains in the Bible symbolize spiritual power and authority, they will be intimately connected with the agents of spiritual powers. The symbol of the mountain in the Bible is multivalent. It has more than one meaning. The mountains can also symbolize spiritual and earthly agents. The angels of the Lord play a significant role in the administration of God's kingdom. The holy angels are spiritual agents who act on behalf of his people and communicate his will. Angels carry out commandments concerning man. They are spiritual beings who can function in both the physical and spiritual realms. The mountain was believed to be the link between the spiritual realm and the physical world in ancient cultures. The Bible reveals a close connection between angels and mountains.

Satan and his fallen angels were once involved in the administration of God's kingdom. They were once holy spiritual agents. After they rebelled, they became the enemies of the Lord. Since the time of Adam, they have been the enemy of God's people. Satan has a kingdom, and since he is not omnipresent, he must use spiritual beings to exert his control over the rulers of the earth.

The beast in Revelation 17 is the manifestation of satanic rule on the earth, and the seven heads of the beast point to the controlling source of this power. The heads are described by the symbols of seven mountains and seven kings. The seven mountains of Revelation 17 are the seven mountains revealed in Matthew. The location of these mountains is in Israel. They show the focus of satanic rule. These mountains are also symbolic. The seven mountains of Revelation 17 can be viewed spiritually as the intervening conduit of evil from the source (Satan) to the kings and kingdoms of the earth. The mountains can spiritually symbolize evil principalities. There is no justification for the assertion that the mountains and kings cannot have an earthly and spiritual application.

The apostle Paul realized that the earthly symbolized spiritual truth. Paul said we must first know the earthly meaning before we can comprehend the spiritual sense. Paul used Hagar to stand for Mount Sinai, which, in turn, symbolized a spiritual covenant (the covenant under the law) and the earthly city of Jerusalem. Sarah stood for the heavenly Jerusalem above. Inherent in Paul's argument is that Sarah also stands for the heavenly mount and the covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ. In Galatians, the mountains have different meanings. The mountains symbolize spiritual covenants and the people who are part of those covenants. The Mountains symbolized two different cities. The mountains symbolized the earthly and the spiritual.

Stars symbolize different things in the Bible. In Daniel 12:3, stars are figurative of the glorified saints. In Jude 13, stars are figurative of apostates. The Jews were chosen to become a nation unto God. Israel and her prophets were the special earthly agents of God to receive his truth and to proclaim it to the rest of the world. The chaste woman of

Revelation 12, which stands as the antithesis to the harlot of Revelation 17, represents spiritual Israel. Spiritual Israel is the mother of all the people of God. This chaste woman has a crown of twelve stars on her head. Many see this as symbolic of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 37:9). The descendants of Abraham, who are partakers of the blessings under the covenant made with Abraham, are symbolized by the stars in the heavens (Gen. 22:17).

In Revelation 1:16 and 20, stars symbolize holy angels. In the Bible, stars are personified and are said to praise, commit an error, sing, and fight (Ps. 148:3; Job 25:5, 38:7; Judg. 5:20).²¹⁷ In the New Testament, stars also point to individual personalities, and not just celestial bodies (Jude 13). In Revelation 22:16, Christ is referred to as the “Morning Star.” In the Bible, the phrase “host of heaven” can mean both the stars in the sky and holy angels.²¹⁸ One can see why the holy angels would be referred to as stars. In different biblical accounts, the angels’ clothes radiated with a brilliant light, thereby reflecting the glory of God. The angels are also as numerous as the stars.

God’s agents are associated with mountains. Israel is God’s nation, and her mountains are his mountains. The whole course of Jewish history is connected to mountains. Mountains are intimately associated with the prophets of Israel and the Messiah of Israel. The people of Israel were chosen to receive the truth of God. They were the connecting link between the truth of God to the rest of the world. They were the earthly agents of the Lord.

Angels are also connected to the mountains. An angel called down from heaven to keep Abraham from lifting his hand against Isaac on Mount Moriah. Angels surrounded Elisha on the mountain. The angel of judgment was stopped at the threshing floor of Araunah. David bought this site, and it later became the mount where the future temple was built. An angel appeared to Zacharias while upon the Temple Mount. They ministered to Jesus after his temptation on a high mountain. They comforted Jesus on the Mount of Olives.

Angels were present at Jesus’s ascension. They will be with Jesus when

he descends to the Mount of Olives at the end of this age. An angel reveals to John that the harlot in Revelation 17 sits on seven mountains. Innumerable angels are linked with Mount Zion. One of the seven angels, which had the seven vials associated with the seven plagues, takes John to a great and high mountain to show him the city of New Jerusalem. The Bible reveals angels are intimately related to the mountains.

The mountains are elevated landforms and are innately part of the earth. Psalm 90:2 reads, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.” Why are the mountains mentioned separately from the earth and the world as being brought forth? Is it because the mountains mentioned are not actual mountains but are symbolic of angels created by the Lord?

We need to follow the Comparative Mention Principle of biblical interpretation. The principle is that a certain verse or group of verses may be interpreted by comparing it with another verse or group of verses.²¹⁹ Jesus is called wisdom because the very same things said about wisdom in the Bible are also spoken about the Messiah. Mountains symbolize spiritual rule, and angels are the spiritual agents of this rule. If the same things said about mountains in the Bible are also spoken about angels, then this reveals an important truth. It provides a strong foundation for asserting that there is a direct association of angels and mountains concerning the will and plan of God.

The holy angels of the Lord are eternal beings who will exist forever. Mountains are symbols of things that are ancient and eternal (Deut. 33:15; Hab. 3:6). Angels are spiritual beings who help to administer the eternal kingdom of God. God calls the holy mountains his foundation (Ps. 87:1). Mountains are the sites of worship (Gen. 22:2; Exod. 3:12; Deut. 33:19; Ps. 48:1). Mountains praise God (Ps. 148:9). Angels were created to worship and praise God (Ps. 148:2; Lk. 2:13-14; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 5:11-13, 7:11).²²⁰

Angels reflect God’s power (Ps. 103:20). The mountains are related to strength and power (Ps. 65:6, 68:16). Mountains are said to rejoice in

the Lord's salvation of Israel and his people (Ps. 89:12, 98:8; Isa. 44:23). Angels in heaven rejoice even when one person receives salvation (Lk. 15:7, 10). Angels are witnesses of God and man (1 Cor. 4:9; Lk. 12:9; 1Tim. 5:21; Rev. 3:5, 14:10). Mountains are witnesses (Mic. 6:1-2). Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim were witnesses of the tribes of Israel (Deut. 27-28; Josh. 8:30-35).²²¹

The laws and the revelations of God are given on the mountains (Gen. 22; Exod. 19, 20; Rev. 21). Angels reveal the laws and revelations of God (Gen. 19:1-22; 2 Kings 1:15; Dan. 8:19, 9:21-23, 10:10-20; Ps. 68:18; Matt. 1:20, 2:13, 19-20; Acts 7:53, 8:26, 10:3-8; Gal. 3, 19; Heb. 2:1-4; Rev. 1:1-3). God reveals his will on the mountains (Gen. 22; Ezek. 40; Matt. 5, 17, 24, 28:16-20). Angels reveal God's will (Acts 5:19-20, 10:1-7). Mountains are places of safety and protection for the people of God (Gen. 8:1-5; Josh. 20:1-7; Ps. 11:1; Isa. 33:15-20; Matt. 24:16). Angels protect God's people (Ps. 34:7, 91:11-12; Dan. 6:22; Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:7-10, 27:23).²²²

Mountains in the Bible are the places of trials and victory for the people of God (Gen. 8:4, 22:1-19; 1 Kings 18:19-42; Ezek. 38-39:7; Zech. 14:4-5; Rev. 16:16-21). Angels are associated with the trials and victory of God's people (Judg. 2:1; Ps. 78:25; Isa. 63:9). The good news was proclaimed from the mountains (Isa. 40:9, 52). Angels are messengers of good news (Gen. 16:9-11). An angel announced the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:20-21; Lk. 1:19-35, 2:8-14). An angel announced the resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 28:2-7). Angels announced Jesus's future return (Acts 1:10-11). The mountains shall bring peace (Ps. 72:2-4). Angels brought news of peace and joy (Lk. 1:13). Mountains are associated with joy (Ps. 89:12; Isa. 40:9, 56:7).²²³

Mountains are associated with both holiness and blasphemy (Jer. 31:23; Ps. 48:1; Rev. 17). The angels of the Lord are associated with holiness, while Satan and his fallen angels are associated with blasphemy. Angels are associated with singing and gladness, and so are the mountains (Job 38:7, 49:13). Mount Sinai, Mount Ebal, Mount Gerizim, Mount Zion, and Mount Moriah were connected to the ark, and angels

were associated with the ark. The lid for the ark was the atonement cover. There were two carved Cherubim at either end on top of the atonement cover. Their outstretched wings covered the atonement cover.

Angels carry out the judgment of the wicked (2 Kings 19:35; Matt. 13:39, 3:47-50; Rev. 20:1-3). The mountains are associated with the judgments of God (2 Sam. 1:21; 1 Kings 18:19-42; Isa. 14:25; Ezek. 38:21-22, 39:4; Joel 2:1; Zech. 6:1; Lk. 23:30; Rev. 6:16). In the Bible, mountains are associated with kingdom rule (Dan. 2:35; Joel 2:1). Both holy angels and fallen angels exert rule over the nations (Dan. 10:13-21, 12:1). The holy angels are intimately associated with the nation of Israel (Judg. 2:1; Ps. 78:25, 49; Isa. 63:8-9; Dan. 12:1). The Bible reveals mountains also are closely associated with the whole history of Israel.²²⁴

Angels fight against the enemies of Israel (Josh. 5:13-15-6:5; 2 Kings 19:35; Isa. 37:36; Dan. 12:1). The enemies of Israel are destroyed on her mountains (Isa. 14:25; Ezek. 39:2-4; Rev. 16:16-21). The liberation of Israel from her enemies is associated with the mountains of Israel (Isa. 52). The angels will gather the people of Israel back to their land (Matt. 24:31). Mountains are associated with the gathering of Israel (Ps. 147:2-12; Isa. 27:13, 56:1-8; Ezek. 20:40, 34:13, 36:8-11, 37:21-22).

Mount Moriah was the site of the temple. Angels are also associated with this mountain (Gen. 22; 2 Sam. 24:14-16). Jesus is returning to the Mount of Olives, and he is returning with his holy angels (Zech. 14:1-5; Matt. 24:30-31). Jesus Christ will rule from his throne in glory “with all the holy angels with him” (Matt. 25:31-32). Mount Zion is associated with kingdom rule over the earth, and this mountain is associated with innumerable angels (Ps. 9:11, 48:2, 87:1-3; Isa. 2:1-5; Mic. 4:1-2; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14).²²⁵ Angels are the agents of spiritual rule. Mountains in the Bible are symbolic of spiritual power and authority.

The mountains in the Bible can also symbolize obstacles and difficulties for the righteous. Today, people make a significant distinction between the earthly and the spiritual. Many even deny the existence of the spiritual realm. This was not true of those who lived in ancient times.²²⁶

Paul revealed the real enemies of Christians are not mere earthly kings and kingdoms, but rather evil principalities and powers.

There are biblical statements made about mountains that pertain specifically to fallen angels. Behind all the hindrances and obstacles in a Christian's life are evil forces. Mountains are symbols of great difficulties (Jer. 13:16; Isa. 40:4; Matt. 17:14-21, 21:21), obstacles (Isa. 41:15-16; Zech. 4:7; Matt. 21:21), and destruction (Gen. 7:19-20; Isa. 42:15; Mal. 1:10). Satan and all the angels who rebelled against God have been judged and will be eternally punished for their rebellion. God causes the mountains to tremble (Ps. 17:7; Hab. 3:10) and to quake (Judg. 5:5; Nah. 1:5).

God scattered the mountains (Hab. 3:6). They were thrown down (Ezek. 38:20). He caused their foundations to burn (Deut. 32:22). God will judge the mountains (Isa. 40:12). He will overturn them and lay them waste (Job 9:5, 28:29; Isa. 42:15). He will remove the mountains (Job 9:5; Isa. 54:10, 64:1).²²⁷ All these statements can apply to the fallen angels who rebelled against their Creator. Satan and his fallen angels were cast from the mount of God after their rebellion. One day in the future they will be cast into the Lake of Fire to receive their eternal punishment.

In Appendix I, we look at the meaning of seven mountains in Jewish thought and literature. The Book of Jude quotes the book of Enoch. In chapter twenty-one of Enoch, there is an empty place described. "And I saw there neither a heaven above nor an earth below, but a chaotic and terrible place and there I saw seven stars of heaven bound together in it like great mountains and burning with fire." Then the angel said to me, "This place is the ultimate end of heaven and earth: it is the prison house for the stars and the powers of heaven." In Revelation, we are told that the seven angels of the Lord are symbolized by "seven stars." These seven stars in Enoch are fallen angels; they are also referred to as "seven burning mountains." These seven mountains represent the imprisoned fallen angels.²²⁸

Satan understands the spiritual significance of the mountain symbol

in the Bible. The sins that he has led people to commit on the mountains were deliberate affronts to the Lord. It was a mocking of the rule of God. The Lord made a covenant with Israel on a mountain. On the mountains of Israel, the Son of God proclaimed the kingdom to Israel. It was also on the mountains of Israel God's chosen people worshipped false gods and sacrificed the very children of God on pagan altars of fire.

The beast of Revelation 17 symbolizes the satanic rule over the earth that will come to its zenith with the kingdom of the Antichrist. This beast has seven heads, and they are described by the symbols of seven mountains and seven kings. The mountains are mentioned first in order. Daniel reveals the Antichrist's empire will be the final empire of successive evil empires that rule over Israel. We also know from Daniel that associated with these evil empires are evil principalities.

Satan uses fallen angels in the administration of his evil kingdom. Throughout the Bible, and especially in Daniel, we see the handiwork of satanic forces in the affairs of nations and the lives of the people (Dan. 10:13, 20, 21). Minear writes about the Jewish way of thinking. "Their minds were dominated by biblical idioms more than by pagan, and the Bible provided ample precedents for the use of mountains to symbolize the fusion of political and religious power."²²⁹ We might add that it also provided ample precedents to demonstrate in the truest sense mountains symbolized spiritual power and authority.

The symbolic meaning of the mountain among Semitic peoples was "as a connecting link between heaven and earth."²³⁰ The holy angels act as intermediaries between God and man and heaven and earth.²³¹ The evil angels act as intermediaries between Satan and his earthly agents. John could undoubtedly understand that the symbols "mountains" and "kings" pointed to the fusion of spiritual power and authority with the rule of earthly kings and kingdoms. It demonstrated the hierarchy of evil rule with the mountains (the high ones) exerting influence over the kings.

One can see a connection between the "high ones" in Isaiah 24 and the mountains in Revelation 17. Many believe that Isaiah 24 depicts

the interplay of spiritual beings and the kings of the earth. We have the “parallelism between the ‘powers’ and the ‘kings’ and the contrast between ‘in the heavens above’ and ‘on the earth below’ suggest the notion of patron angels, which is probably also present in Deuteronomy 32:8; Psalm 82; and Daniel 10:13; 20-21; 12:1.”²³²

Isaiah 2, for example, on which John draws elsewhere, visualizes the future in terms of the conflict between “the mountain of the house of the Lord” and “all the high mountains.”²³³ Here, the mountain symbol points to kingdoms in conflict. Christ came to destroy the works of Satan. He came to cast down the “high ones” and the “high mountains,” not merely to bring down one empire. Others have raised the question of whether the mountains in Revelation 17 are also used to symbolize “invisible forces and realities.”²³⁴ We believe the mountains symbolize both the earthly and the spiritual. We believe the seven mountains are actual mountains revealed in the Bible. However, these seven mountains spiritually are figurative of seven evil principalities who act as the spiritual agents of Satan.

The fact that spiritual forces influence the nations is revealed in the Bible. In Revelation 17, the seven mountains are mentioned before the seven kings/kingdoms. Angels exert authority over individual kingdoms (Dan. 10:13, 12:1). Arnold points out that the idea is further revealed in Deuteronomy 32:8-9. “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his heritage.” Instead “of the children of Israel,” in the KJV Arnold cites the RSV, which has “the sons of God.” The Septuagint and a fragment of Deuteronomy from Qumran support “the sons of God” translation.²³⁵

Most of Jesus’s Old Testament quotes in Matthew were from the Septuagint. Arnold notes that the Septuagint interprets “the sons of God” as angels. The passage in Deuteronomy can be translated as “he fixed the bounds of the people according to the number of angels of God (Deut. 32:8).” “The passage then teaches that all kingdoms are under the

control of spiritual powers.”²³⁶ This idea is further expanded in the book of Daniel. Kline also believes that seeing the “son of El” as a spiritual “prince” of an individual kingdom is a more general interpretation.²³⁷

Is Satan referred to as a mountain in the Bible? One of the names of Satan is *Beelzebul/Beelzebub*, which comes from the Hebrew name *Baalzebub* (*lord of the flies*). Some believe this word may have been an alteration of the Canaanite *Baalzebul* (*lord of the high place*).²³⁸ Lucifer was a created being who had duties associated with the mount of God. His rebellion also involved the mount of God. He purposed in his heart to ascend the heights of this mount in an attempt to be like the Most High. After his rebellion, Lucifer became Satan, and he was cast from the mount of God. The tower of Babel can be thought of as a man-made mountain to reach into the heavens. This satanically inspired endeavor revealed the depth of the wickedness, ignorance, and arrogance of men. Satan enticed rebellious Israel to build pagan altars upon the “high places.” He offered Jesus the glory of the kingdoms of the world from an “exceeding high mountain” in Israel as an affront to God.

In the middle of Jeremiah 51, the Lord begins to speak prophetically not about the ancient empire of Babylon but Babylon, the great in the future. “Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain” (Jer. 51:25). This passage refers to Satan and the kingdom of the Antichrist. In the future, he will be thrown out of the heavens forever. He will be cast down to earth. He will possess the body of the Antichrist. This time is the great Tribulation when Satan will rule directly on earth.

In Revelation 9:11, we are told, “And they had as king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew tongue is A-bad-don, but in Greek tongue hath the name A-pol-ly-on.” *Abaddon* is a Hebrew name that means *ruin* or *destruction*.²³⁹ Some believe Abaddon refers to Satan, while others believe it refers to a fallen angel. What is clear is that Satan is the real destroyer. The “destroying

mountain” refers to Satan and his kingdom. It is the antithesis to the stone that becomes a great mountain that covers the whole earth. The “destroying mountain” will face the judgment of God and will become a burnt mountain.

On the Mount of Transfiguration, God proclaims that Jesus is his Son. God also tells us “to listen to him.” We choose to look to Jesus to understand the seven mountains and seven kings of Revelation 17. Likewise, we look to Jesus to understand the spiritual symbolism associated with the mountains in the New Testament.

There is an event that takes place the next day after the transfiguration with a high mountain in the background (Matt. 17:14-21). This is one of many events that demonstrate the importance and spiritual significance of mountains in the gospel of Matthew. We need to pay close attention to the words of Jesus in order not to miss all the spiritual truths he is trying to impart about mountains.

The whole New Testament account reveals that a devil had possessed a child since birth. The father had brought the child to the disciples, but they were not able to cast the evil spirit out. The father explains how the possession has affected the boy, and he asks Jesus to have mercy on his son. Jesus casts the devil out by a command. He tells the disciples they were not able to remove the devil because of their lack of faith and not being prepared through prayer and fasting. Jesus’s confrontation with demons must also be understood as confronting Satan’s kingdom since they are his spiritual agents.²⁴⁰

Jesus makes a statement that is well known to many Christians. We need to pay close attention to Jesus’s specific words to know the full significance of what he says. “If ye have the faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye will say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it will remove; and nothing will be impossible to you. Howbeit this kind goeth out but by prayer and fasting” (Matt. 17:20-21).

We need to focus on some apparent facts. What had Jesus just removed? “And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him.” Jesus had just removed an evil spirit from the boy by a command. This act can

be viewed as a direct assault on the kingdom of Satan. This act of spiritual authority and dominion is carried out with a mountain in view. While Jesus is revealing the importance and power of faith, prayer, and fasting, we believe he is also revealing spiritual truth regarding the symbolism of the mountain. The mountain in view is one of the seven places called a mountain by the Holy Spirit in Matthew. We believe it is also one of the seven mountains referred to in Revelation 17.

The phrase “moving mountains” is found in ancient Jewish writings and was used by rabbis to refer to accomplishing something thought to be impossible.²⁴¹ Through faith in God, all things are possible. One must have faith, but one must also be spiritually prepared to do battle through prayer and fasting. With the casting out of the demon, many miss the relationship between the mountain and the evil spirit.

In Zechariah, a real mountain was not an obstacle to Zerubbabel, the servant of the Lord. The real obstacles were evil spiritual forces. In Matthew, Jesus said, “this kind goeth out but by prayer and fasting.” Jesus states that “this mountain,” with the fifth mountain of Matthew in the background, can be removed by the same means. The removal of the demon is equated to the removal of the mountain in the background. Jesus is making an association between the evil spirit called the devil and one of the seven mountains of Matthew.

Jesus speaks about removing another mountain in Matthew 21. This time, the mountain is the Mount of Olives. When Jesus saw a fig tree with no fruit growing, he said, “let no fruit grow on these henceforward forever. And presently the fig tree withered away.” The disciples were amazed at how quickly the tree withered. Jesus then said, “verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done” (Matt. 21:21).

The fig tree with no fruit was symbolic of rebellious Israel, but what did this mountain represent? Jesus was not speaking about removing just any mountain. The Greek text reveals Jesus was specifically referring to (“this mountain”) the Mount of Olives. Jeremiah 51 refers to Satan

and the kingdom of the Antichrist, which he will control at the end of this age as “the destroying mountain.” This phrase is used to describe the Mount of Olives in 2 Kings 23:13. The phrase “mount of corruption” is used, but the word used for corruption is often translated as “destruction.” Both meanings aptly apply because shrines to pagan gods were built there and people offered sacrifices to pagan gods. The idolatry introduced by King Solomon had destructive consequences for Israel. This mountain symbolized the ultimate source of rebellion and idolatry. Revelation reveals that the great city known as Mystery Babylon will be cast into the sea.

There is no mention of removing the hills of Rome in the Bible, but Jesus speaks of removing two specific mountains in Matthew. We know the Mount of Olives will be moved when the King of Kings returns to earth to enact judgment on Satan’s kingdom and the rebellious of the world. To enact judgment against all evil, Jesus returns to the Mount of Olives and splits it into two mountains. This mountain is an obstacle in the path of Israel. It moves, and the great valley becomes a way of escape. Again, we see the judgment of the kingdom of God against Satan and his kingdom is associated with a mountain.

The battle between good and evil is fought on two fronts and in two different realms. No victory is won on earth without first being won in the spiritual realm. Those who view the seven mountains and seven kings as representing merely seven hills, seven earthly rulers, or seven kingdoms deny the reality of the spiritual struggle Christians face. The mountains symbolize spiritual power and authority. Therefore, they point to a spiritual foundation. Should we not follow this same pattern when trying to understand the beast of Revelation 17, whose heads are described as seven mountains and kings?

In the first chapter of Revelation, Jesus tells us the meaning of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks. He reveals that the seven stars are holy angels and the seven candlesticks are seven churches. The holy angels are associated with the churches. The candlesticks and stars represent the earthly and heavenly agents of God. It is through the

Church, the body of Christ, that the kingdom of God is manifested throughout the earth and associated with the Church are the holy angels.

Revelation is a book of contrasts. We should view the seven mountains and seven kings as the antithesis of the seven churches and seven holy angels. It should not be surprising that two groups of sevens will likewise symbolize the earthly and spiritual agents of satanic rule. Seven fallen angels associated with seven successive empires help advance Satan's rule over the mountains and the nation of Israel. The antitheses to the seven stars are the seven mountains. In the ancient world, there was an interplay of the symbols "mountains" and "stars" in depicting kingly rule.²⁴²

Evil rulers are the enemies of the Lord and his people. The complete truth is that the enemies of the Lord and his people are the unseen satanic forces who have exerted Satan's influence over the rulers of the world. There is a hierarchy in the kingdom of God. Isaiah 24:21-22 and Psalm 82 depict angels or stars that are associated with earthly rulers. The court of heaven is depicted as a king's court with God surrounded by his subjects (sons). The prophets of God are messengers or ambassadors who attend heavenly cabinet meetings to receive instruction and relay information (1 Kings 22:19-23).²⁴³

There is also a hierarchy of rule in Satan's kingdom. The book of Daniel reveals there is a spiritual war between the holy angels and the fallen angels. This war involves the kingdoms of the world, but at the center of this conflict is Israel. Ancient men from varied religious and cultural backgrounds held a common belief. They believed in spiritual powers. The idea of a spiritual battle going on behind the stage of history and the veil of physical reality permeates the Bible and many ancient writings. The belief in the interaction of spiritual forces and the rulers of kingdoms was prevalent in the first century.²⁴⁴

The theme of many early Christian hymns was the authority of Jesus over the "powers." Seven times the apostle Paul mentions rulers, authorities, and principalities as angels.²⁴⁵ "Paul uses a Greek expression *exousiai* which, exactly like the designation 'rulers of the world', refers

in secular Greek indeed to the earthly authorities, the State, but at the same time means to the Jewish readers ‘invisible powers.’”²⁴⁶ Cullmann and others believe the “powers” referred to both human and spiritual.²⁴⁷ Daniel reveals that there are evil principalities that exert Satan’s influence over kingdoms (Dan. 10:20, 21). Behind all the evil rulers that have lived throughout history, we find spiritual principalities and ultimately Satan, the head of all evil. We believe this truth is revealed in the symbols of the seven mountains and seven kings.

Cullmann asserts that when Christ defeated the spiritual powers, he also brought the political rulers, who are their agents under his rule.²⁴⁸ We see this truth is echoed in the proclamation made by Jesus on the seventh mountain of Matthew. While the rule of the King of Kings has not been manifested over all the earth, he is the head of all things and all power has been given to him.

By understanding the biblical meaning of the seven heads, seven mountains, and seven kings, we can know the earthly and spiritual foundations of the great harlot. Through the biblical meaning of the above symbols, we can see the focus of satanic rule, which is Israel. Satan seeks to control the mountains of Israel by exerting influence over successive empires throughout history.²⁴⁹ Also, through the symbols of mountains and kings, we can understand the hierarchy of satanic rule, which are the spiritual and earthly agents of Satan.

By understanding the biblical meaning of the seven mountains and seven kings, we can know the location of the harlot (found within Israel). By understanding the above symbols, we can identify the earthly and spiritual powers, which are the harlot’s foundation. Through the seven mountains and seven kings, we see the unfolding of Satan’s plan. He has tried to carry out his rule and thwart the rule that God has ordained for righteous Israel and the world. Through the seven mountains of Matthew, we see God’s plan for the redemption of man, his people, and his nation. Through these mountains, we also see the judgment of God against Satan and his kingdom.

11



The Foundation of Mystery Babylon: The Beast with Seven Heads in Revelation 17

When viewing world history, many see only the rise and fall of kingdoms, considering the political, economic, military, and cultural dynamics that existed. The real dynamics behind the rise and fall of these kingdoms can only be understood from the Bible. Contrary to what many of the wise men of the world believe, every governmental rule has a spiritual foundation. God gave Adam dominion over the earth, but through sin, he lost this dominion to Satan. God later chose Abraham and promised that his seed would become a nation through which all the nations of the world would be blessed. Israel was unlike any other kingdom of the world. God views Israel as the navel of the earth. God is the true King of Israel.

The Lord promised Israel would be “the head of all nations” if the people continued to obey and serve him. He also warned the people of

the consequences if they followed false gods and did not continue to obey his commandments. If Israel rebelled and refused to obey God, kingdoms would arise to oppress and rule over her. The Bible reveals that many in Israel became guilty of idolatry. Many of the people deliberately disobeyed the commandments of God. They desecrated the temple of God and the mountains of God. Rather than Israel ruling as “the head of all nations,” successive kingdoms rose to be the head over her as the Lord had warned.

If we are to understand the last mystery in Revelation, then we must turn to the first mystery revealed in the book of Daniel. If we are to understand the beast with seven heads in Revelation 17, we must compare it with the beasts in the book of Daniel. The first mystery in the Bible concerns the rise of successive kingdoms throughout history until the righteous King of Israel returns. At the center of the Bible and God’s plan for the earth, we find the nation of Israel. King Nebuchadnezzar had dreamed of an image whose head was made of gold. The chest and arms were made of silver. The belly and thighs were made of brass. The legs were of iron, while the feet were of a mixture of iron and clay.

Daniel explained that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. He then explained that the other different metals symbolized kingdoms that would arise in the future. The silver symbolized the empire of Medes-Persia, which would appear after Babylon. The brass pointed to the Greek Empire, which arose after Medes-Persia. The iron was a symbol of the Roman Empire. Jesus Christ is the heir to the throne of Israel. During Jesus’s time upon earth, the Roman Empire ruled over Israel and the seven mountains of Matthew. The teachings of Jesus would inevitably bring him into conflict with Roman rule. There will be a fifth kingdom composed of iron mixed with clay that will rise to power at the end of this age.

The first mystery in Daniel concerns more than the rule of earthly kings and the rise of successive kingdoms. Later in Daniel, God reveals the hierarchy of evil rule. History chronicles the rule of different kings over the kingdoms of the world, but the Bible reveals the real hierarchy

of rule. In Daniel, we see there is a spiritual war taking place that involves the interaction of powerful spiritual beings and world kingdoms. In Daniel, the angel of the Lord revealed that over the kingdoms of Persia and Greece are princes of darkness who seek to carry out Satan's will. We should discern that there is an evil principality associated with each kingdom.

Over the kingdoms of the world, there are evil forces that seek to accomplish the will of Satan. There are also holy angels who war against the evil principalities to accomplish the will of God. Throughout history, Israel has not only been the focus of many wars but has also been at the center of a spiritual war. "Daniel's first vision (ch.2) ended with the kingdom of Christ; the second vision (ch.7) ended with the same event but was preceded by the rise and fall of Antichrist. The third and fourth visions (ch.8, 10-11) end with the downfall of Antichrist."²⁵⁰ God's revelations are progressive. God builds upon previous truths and expands this truth with each subsequent revelation.

In Daniel chapter two, successive kingdoms are symbolized by the different metals of a great image, and in chapter seven, successive kingdoms are symbolized by different beasts. History reveals that there have been many great empires throughout ages, but Daniel speaks of a specific number. Many refer to the kingdoms of Daniel as world kingdoms. While they were the dominant kingdoms of their day, not one of these kingdoms ever ruled over all the earth. Others would have us believe that the commonality shared by these kingdoms was the same religious system. It is not surprising there would be similarities seen with the many pagan religions, for the author of them all is Satan. However, we see that there were significant differences in the beliefs and practices found in the religions of the successive kingdoms. False religions have been associated with countless kingdoms throughout history, not just seven.

Does the Bible reveal the significance of the kingdoms in Daniel? The kingdoms revealed in Daniel comprised different land areas. However, the one commonality shared by all these kingdoms was that each ruled over the throne of Israel and the mountains that God calls his own. "In

fact, if all the land of the empires was put on a map, Palestine would be in the center.”²⁵¹ Since the nation of Israel and the mountains of Israel have been the focus of Satan throughout history, should not we focus upon Israel and the kingdoms revealed in Daniel to understand Revelation 17? The second and seventh chapters of Daniel reveal successive world kingdoms throughout history. “Chapter eight-twelve expounds the earlier pattern of world history in detail but from the viewpoint of God’s people in particular, and with a view to explaining God’s purposes for them.”²⁵²

Noted Bible scholars throughout history have recognized the commonality shared by all these kingdoms. About the great image of metal in Daniel, Henry writes, “The image represented the kingdoms of the earth that should successively bare rule among the nations and have influence on the affairs of the Jewish church.” “There were other powerful kingdoms in the world at this time, as that of the Scythians; but it was the kingdom of Babylon that reigned over the Jews.”²⁵³

“There were other mighty peoples of old besides the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, but the Holy Spirit has passed them by, because their history had no bearing on that of the Chosen Nation. The same reason explains why the empires of Babylon, Medes-Persia, Greece, and Rome, do occupy such a prominent notice in the book of Daniel—they were the enemies into whose hands God delivered his wayward people.” “These principles have received wide recognition by prophetic students, and therefore it is more than strange that so few have applied them in their study of the final prophetic book.”²⁵⁴

In Revelation 17, we are told of a beast with seven heads and they are associated with blasphemy. “Sometimes the complete understanding of biblical terms is hindered by how these same terms are used in our present time. The true biblical meaning of a term can become clouded.” The word “heads” points to those in control, but the New Testament usage has a more specific connotation. Richards points out that in the New Testament, “the biblical emphasis on the head is as the source or origin.”²⁵⁵

A beast in the Bible symbolizes a kingdom or empire. The real source behind evil kingdoms is Satan. The real source of all evil is Satan. The fact that the heads belong to a beast and the beast ascends from the abyss in Revelation 17 is a clear indication that the diabolical nature of the beast transcends merely the physical realm. The rule in question likewise transcends the political rule of one earthly kingdom.

The beast with the seven heads in Revelation 17 once was, now is not, and who is to come is the antithesis of the Lamb. The Lamb is the Son of God who is, who was, and who is to come. In the New Testament, there are many statements concerning Jesus being the “head.” Jesus is the head over every man (1 Cor. 11:3); the head over things to the Church (Eph. 1:22) that members of the Body of Christ “may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:15); Christ is the head of the Church (Eph. 5:23); Jesus is the head of the Body of Christ (Col. 1:18); Jesus is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10); and Jesus is the head corner (the chief cornerstone) (Matt. 21:42, Mark 12:10, Lk. 20:17, Acts 4:11, 1 Pet. 2:7).²⁵⁶

Horns in the Bible symbolize power and strength. The horn is associated with the anointing and the rule of kings. In Revelation, we see the Lamb of God with seven horns is in the midst of the throne of God. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Antichrist is referred to as the “little horn.” The Dragon in Revelation 12, the beast in Revelation 13, and the beast in Revelation 17 all have seven heads and ten horns. We should not be surprised that the antithesis to the rule of the Lamb and the rule of Israel as the head of all nations should have seven heads.

We are told in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of Eve would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan). Christ is the seed of Eve and bruised Satan’s head through his crucifixion and resurrection. Psalm 110 points to Jesus, the Messiah. This Psalm reveals that the Messiah will wound the “heads” of many countries. The meaning of the word “wound” means *to smash into pieces*. The word used for “heads” is the singular form “head.” Barrett interprets the head to point to Satan himself, and we certainly agree.²⁵⁷

The word “heads” points to dominion, but it also points to a union. It points to the union of the spiritual and earthly. Christ is the head of the Church, and we, as Christians, are members of the “body of Christ” through him. Likewise, the beast of Revelation 17 ultimately points to Satan as the head of all evil. An undeniable fact is that Satan must use both spiritual and earthly agents to accomplish his rule. Therefore, the seven heads of the beast must reflect this truth.

There are numerous passages in the Old Testament where the word “heads” points explicitly to the rulers over Israel. Exodus 18:25, “And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.” Numbers 1:16, “These were the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thousands in Israel.” The word “heads” also points to the rulers of those who oppressed Israel (Judg. 7:25). Some have seen the seven heads of the beast of Revelation 17 as symbolizing the sum of all evil. How can the heads of this beast typify the controlling source of evil if the heads symbolize only physical kings or kingdoms? That does not depict the hierarchy of satanic rule that we know exists. Since the mountains and kings further describe the heads, they must portray spiritual truth concerning the administration of Satan’s kingdom and its manifestation upon the earth.

The seven heads must ultimately symbolize more than seven kings or kingdoms and seven geological structures (mountains). There must be spiritual symbolism associated with the seven heads (seven mountains and seven kings). “The true connection is, as the head is the prominent part of the body, so the mountain is prominent in the land. Like ‘sea’ and ‘earth’ and ‘waters... peoples,’ so mountains have a symbolic meaning, viz., prominent seats of power. Especially, such as being prominent hindrances to the cause of God (Ps. 68: 16-17; Isa. 40:4, 41:15, 49:11; Ezek. 35:2).”²⁵⁸ Seven mountains are in view in Revelation 17, but the seven mountains symbolize more than just physical structures.

Revelation reveals that Satan influences the rulers of the kingdoms of the world (Rev. 11:15, 12:3, 7-12). The seven heads of the beast must

reveal how this rule is carried out. In Ephesians 3:10, Paul writes about principalities and powers in heavenly places. His statement is referring to spiritual beings. Paul goes on to tell us in Ephesians 6:12 that spiritual principalities and powers are the rulers over the evil in this world and are the enemies of God's people. The question one must consider is whether the word "mountains" in the seventeenth chapter is also used to symbolize "invisible forces and realities."²⁵⁹

"In three instances where the apostle Paul speaks of the State, he uses an expression that refers to the invisible powers that stand behind the State. Underlying the whole of the Apocalypse is the outlook which sees engagements between invisible warlike powers is taking place behind earthly happenings."²⁶⁰ The heads of the beast in Revelation 17 must also point to the mystical and hierarchical relationship between Satan and the kingdoms of the world. The symbols of the mountains and kings must depict this relationship in revealing the hierarchy of satanic rule.

"The head is the governing power and implies 'rule.' If we are talking about the dragon of Revelation 12 or the beast of Revelation 17, we are talking about spiritual evil."²⁶¹ Therefore, the heads of the beast must have a spiritual application. The source of control should be evident in the symbols that describe the heads of the beast. Unfortunately, the two symbols given to describe the heads (mountains and kings) are interpreted by many to refer to only the physical (earthly kings and kingdoms or one empire and seven of its rulers).

Three of the beasts in Daniel 7 have one head each, while the beast that looks like a leopard has four heads, for a total of seven heads.²⁶² The four heads point to the fact that the Empire of Alexander the Great was divided into four different kingdoms. What is clear is that the heads of the beasts in Daniel do not point to successive kings of one kingdom, and neither do the seven heads of the beasts in Revelation.

"But Satan is a spirit and cannot operate in the affairs of our world except through the minds, passions, and activities of men. He needs to embody himself in earthly agents, and to put himself forth

in earthly organisms to accomplish his murderous will.”²⁶³ Satan is not omnipresent. He needs spiritual agents to accomplish his will as much as he needs earthly agents. Seven kingdoms are in view in Revelation 17, but we have not understood the complete truth if we do not see the real hierarchy of evil over these kingdoms. Seven evil principalities work to do the will of Satan by influencing these kingdoms and their rulers. The above truths are depicted by the symbols of the mountains and kings.

The rule over kingdoms is dealt with in both Daniel and Revelation. There are beasts described in both books, and these beasts are associated with kingdom rule. We must understand the associations of these beasts. Johnson asserts that there is no logical reason not to identify the beast with seven heads in Revelation 17 with the first beast in chapter 13, “which is also inseparable from the seven-headed dragon of chapter 12.”²⁶⁴ The dragon with seven heads in Revelation 12 points to Satan. Therefore, the beast in Revelation 17 ultimately symbolizes Satan and satanic rule.

There is a close association between the beasts in Revelation with the beasts in Daniel 7. In Revelation 10, John is told to “eat the little open book,” and then to prophesy to many people. Conner points out that the moment John eats the little book, he immediately takes up the language from Daniel 7.²⁶⁵ There is an undeniable connection between the beast with seven heads in chapter 13 and the beasts in Daniel 7. The first beast in chapter 13 has the characteristics of the beasts in Daniel 7. The beast in Revelation 13 has a mouth like a lion, which is similar to what is said about the first beast in Daniel. It has feet like a bear and mirrors the second beast in Daniel. It has the body of a leopard, which is the description of the third beast in Daniel. The first beast in chapter 13 and the beast in chapter 17 have ten horns like the fourth beast in Daniel 7. The beast with seven heads in Revelation 13 contains the different parts of the beasts in Daniel 7 and is a mirror image of them.²⁶⁶

Both Daniel and Revelation point to the Antichrist. Both books reveal that Jesus will return to end evil rule over the earth. Behind the curtains of world history, there has been an ongoing spiritual war between

satanic principalities and the angels of the Lord. Satan uses seven evil principalities to influence the rulers of successive kingdoms. We should see that this truth revealed in the symbols that describe the beast with seven heads in Revelation 17.

Why are there multiple beasts in Daniel, but one beast with seven heads in Revelation 17? The beasts in Daniel depict man's perspective of evil rule. Men do not view things as God does. Men view evil rule through multiple kingdoms and kings in different periods in history. The focus is on Egypt and its Pharaoh, or Rome and its Nero. Man is confined by the physical world and time is just one dimension of the physical realm. It is not surprising that man views history through the prism of successive ages. Satanic rule over Israel is revealed through successive kingdoms symbolized by beasts in the book of Daniel.

There is an important truth God wants us to know. God's perspective is different. We see how God views things in Revelation 17. God is not constrained by any dimension of his creation, including time. God views all events and kingdoms throughout history in an instant. If we look at how God views events rather than from the perspective of men, evil rule throughout history can be viewed as one evil kingdom controlled by Satan. To depict this central truth in the book of Revelation, one beast with seven heads depicts satanic rule over Israel and the world rather than multiple beasts seen in Daniel.

In the second chapter of Daniel, there is an image of a man composed of different metals and these metals symbolize different kingdoms that rise to rule over Israel. In Daniel 7, these kingdoms are symbolized by different beasts. The image points to the kingdoms ruled by earthly kings, but the beastly kingdoms are revealing the fact that over these kingdoms are evil principalities and we know that Satan is the head of these principalities.

The seven-headed beast of Revelation 17 is merely an expansion of the revelation concerning the image of metal and the beasts found in the book of Daniel. In Daniel, we have five kingdoms, but in Revelation 17, we have seven kingdoms. How can we know the identity of the

other two kingdoms? If the Bible is our foundation, then it is clear. The kingdoms revealed in Daniel ruled over the land of Israel and oppressed the people of Israel. Two preceding kingdoms, which were Egypt and Assyria, are well documented in the Bible as the chief enemies of Israel in the Old Testament. No one can deny that in the Old Testament, the empires of Egypt and Assyria play a dominant role as the enemies and oppressors of Israel.

The empires of Egypt and Assyria ruled over the people of God and the mountains of God. They both oppressed Israel, and the Bible refers to them as yokes around her neck. An interesting fact is that “in many places, too, the oppression of Israel in Egypt and Assyria are linked together and made typical of that last oppression of Israel under the Antichrist (Isa. 10:24, 27:13; Hos. 9:3, 11:11).”²⁶⁷ Zechariah reads, “I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria (Zech.10:10).” What is also interesting is that the “great city,” Babylon the Great, is allegorically referred to as Egypt in Revelation 11. It is also referred to as Sodom, which many believe was located near the Dead Sea. This area was later found within the Assyrian Empire.

We believe six of the kings in Revelation 17 symbolize Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medes-Persia, Greece, and the Roman Empire. There is to be a seventh kingdom controlled by the Antichrist. He will also rule over the nation of Israel and the distinct group of seven mountains in Matthew. Some criticize the successive kingdom theory by stating that John’s description is merely theological, not political. A crucial mistake is not seeing that Revelation 17 focuses on Israel. The focus is not on all the kingdoms in the world, but specifically seven kingdoms that Satan uses in his diabolical plan to destroy Israel.

Some believe John is describing only the spiritual reality behind kingdoms and not the successive rise and fall of actual kingdoms throughout history. Others want us to focus on seven successive kingdoms without understanding the spiritual reality behind them. The book of Daniel makes it clear that God wants us to understand both the spiritual reality

behind the kingdoms of the world and the manifestations of evil rule throughout history.

The stone symbolizing Christ and his kingdom strikes the great image in Daniel chapter two. This stone does not crush one kingdom. It crushes all the kingdoms. Since the beast in Revelation 13 is a composite of the four beasts in Daniel 7 it cannot be identified with merely Rome.²⁶⁸ Likewise, neither can the beast in Revelation 17. Because the stone strikes all the kingdoms of the image made of metals, some people state that all these kingdoms will be revived at the end of this age. However, we believe they are missing the key point. These kingdoms and kings have all ceased to exist many centuries ago. What remains is the focus of satanic rule, which is Israel and her mountains and the evil principalities that have exerted satanic control over them. There is to be a seventh kingdom controlled by the Antichrist at the end of this age. This kingdom will be associated with all the evil principalities that held sway over the previous kingdoms. All the previous kingdoms ruled over Israel and her mountains and this final kingdom will also.

Satan has focused on Israel because God is her true King. The Promised Land is called “the patrimony of Israel.” Israel, by divine election, is chosen to occupy this land and treat it as its own; however, Zimmerli states, “But the land is also spoken of as the ‘patrimony of Yahweh,’ an expression that makes the holy land, Yahweh’s personal property.”²⁶⁹ The “primary imagery of kingship in Revelation is a feature of the power conflict between the Lamb and the beast (Rev. 17:14, 19:19).”²⁷⁰ The seven-headed beast attempts to usurp the rule that belongs to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and the head of the Body of Christ.

In the Old Testament, Joshua was chosen to lead the Israelites who had not sinned in the desert and were obedient to God to the Promised Land. There were seven kingdoms that were driven out by Israel under the leadership of Joshua (Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites). Israel was successful against her enemies when she obeyed God, but sin and rebellion brought defeat. God

had commanded Israel to possess the land and drive out all the pagans. Even Joshua did not drive out all the pagans. It is only through Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, that the fulfillment of the will and plan for Israel will be fully accomplished.

The Bible reveals that even after Israel was victorious in the Promised Land, she did not heed God's warning. Even after all the miracles God had performed on Israel's behalf, she again rebelled against God. Rebellious Israel played the harlot. Israel had defeated seven kingdoms in the Promised Land, but they did not drive out all the pagans as commanded by God. Because of sin and disobedience, seven kingdoms would arise to rule over Israel. Rather than Israel being the head of all nations, kingdoms under the influence of seven evil principalities, whose head is Satan, would arise to rule over the mountains of God.

For a kingdom to be the head of Israel is an act of blasphemy. We know that the Antichrist will rule over Israel's mountains and under the title "the Assyrian;" he will be trodden down on the same mountains. The Bible chronicles the blasphemy associated with the mountains of Israel in the past and the desecration that will be seen in the future. The manifestations of evil are in many forms, but there is one ultimate source of evil. Jesus did not view the world as being influenced by different groups of demons or evil earthly rulers. Jesus viewed the world as one kingdom controlled by Satan. He did not come just to cast out individual demons. He will not return to crush one empire. Jesus came to conquer and destroy the whole kingdom of Satan.²⁷¹ He is coming back to end all evil rule on the earth.

The heads of the beast are associated with blasphemy. The heads are described as seven mountains and seven kings. In the Old Testament, the Mount of Olives was called the Mount of Corruption. It was on the mountains that rebellious Israel worshiped false gods and sacrificed the very children of God on pagan altars of fire. In the Bible, blasphemy is also associated with the empires that ruled over Israel and her mountains. Egypt and Assyria both ruled over Israel. About Egypt and Assyria, God declares, "Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord,

that my people is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make them howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed” (Isa. 52:5). “And thou shalt know that I am the LORD, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume” (Ezek. 35:12).

In the sixth chapter of Ezekiel, there are specific prophecies against the mountains of Israel because of the sin of idolatry. In the thirty-sixth chapter of the same book, there are prophecies about the mountains of Israel that speak of judgment on those who oppress Israel. There are also prophecies of restoration and blessings for the people of Israel. Successive kings and empires have ruled over the mountains of Israel. These same mountains are related to the defeat of the enemies of Israel.

The throne of Israel is spoken of as the throne of the Lord (1 Chron. 28:5, 29:23). Some see David’s throne as representing the throne of the Lord in heaven.²⁷² Successive empires under the influence of satanic principalities have ruled over the mountains of God and the throne of David. Psalm 74 reveals that to attack the Lord’s heritage, his sanctuary, his people, and Zion is an act of blasphemy.²⁷³ The seven mountains of Matthew are in Israel. The book of Ezekiel reveals that the throne of God is found in Israel forever. That is why Satan and his evil principalities have sought to rule over these mountains. To attack Jerusalem and Zion is to go against the very throne of God. It is to challenge God’s sovereign authority. Such an act is the epitome of blasphemy.²⁷⁴

Revelation 17 reveals that the great harlot sits on the seven heads of the beast, which are then described as mountains and kings. Isaiah 24 deals with the end of this age and God’s judgment upon the earth. There are two groups that Christ will punish: “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” The “high ones” refer to the invisible rulers of the darkness of this world, in association with the “kings of the earth” (Dan. 10:13, 20, 21). We should discern that spiritual beings hold influence over the kingdoms. One can certainly see

a connection between the high ones in Isaiah 24 and the mountains in Revelation 17.

Both the tenth and the eleventh chapters of Daniel reveal there are spiritual forces at work in the affairs of men and nations. While they are not visible, their influence on our world and us is real. We struggle not only against those people opposed to God but also evil forces. We are not in the battle alone. There are innumerable holy angels at work thwarting the work of Satan's minions and helping people to carry out the will of the Lord.

Paul revealed that the earthly and the physical symbolized spiritual truth. If the mountains symbolize spiritual rule and authority, then they point to a spiritual foundation as well as a location. The harlot sits on seven mountains. Mount Sinai is a real mountain, but it also stands as a symbol of a spiritual foundation (covenant of the law). The seven mountains are seven actual mountains found in the Bible that depict what spiritually is supporting the harlot (the great city). If we use apostle Paul's blueprint, then we should see that the symbols seven mountains and seven kings have a physical and a spiritual application.

The spiritual meaning of the mountains must also point to none other than the dark powers and principalities that were written about by the apostle Paul. The evil principalities are the real enemies of the people of God. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). Seven mountains in Israel are the focus of satanic rule and he uses seven kingdoms throughout history to rule over these mountains. Spiritually, the seven mountains symbolize seven evil principalities who are the spiritual agents of satanic rule while the rulers of the kingdoms (kings) symbolize the earthly agents of Satan. Through the earthly and spiritual meaning of these symbols, we see the focus of satanic rule and the hierarchy of satanic rule.

The number seven in Genesis 21 points both to an oath and to the complete satisfaction of the oath.²⁷⁵ The Hebrew word for "swear" or

“to make an oath” is *shaba* (Strong’s 7650). This word comes from the Hebrew word for the number seven, which is *shebah* (Strong’s 7651).²⁷⁶ The number seven is also linked with covenants because a covenant concerned oaths made between two parties, and it is believed that a covenant was ratified by repeating an oath seven times. There are seven covenant names of God found in the Bible. Mystery Babylon symbolizes people who have broken their covenant relationship with God through idolatry. The destruction of Babylon is mentioned seven times in Revelation.²⁷⁷ The destruction of Babylon falls under the seventh vial and the seventh trumpet.

The word “mystery” appears last in the Bible about a harlot that sits on the seven heads of a scarlet-colored beast. The harlot is said to have a kingdom over the kings of the earth. The first time the word “mystery” occurs in the Bible, it also concerns empires that rule over Israel. The Old Testament depicts idolatrous Israel as a harlot. Israel was called the wife of God. Only faithless Israel is deserving of the title “Mother of Harlots.” It is Israel’s covenant relationship with God that makes her the wife of God. It is the breaking of the covenant that makes her the “Mother of Harlots.”²⁷⁸ In Revelation 18:4, a message is given to some of the inhabitants of Mystery Babylon. A voice from heaven says, “come out of her my people.” The phrase “my people” is a covenant title and designates the people as members of a covenant.

The harlot is intoxicated with the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6). Jesus charges a city in Israel with the murder of the prophets (Matt. 23:29-39). “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication” (Rev.17:4). These colors and things were associated with the offerings in the sanctuary and the vestments of the high priest.²⁷⁹ A city is Israel is declared more sinful than Sodom, a wicked city that was destroyed by God

(Ezek.1648-52). An angel announces that Babylon is “fallen, fallen”

This is similar to the lamentation Amos gives before Jerusalem fell (Amos 5:2).²⁸⁰

Only Israel had a covenant right to rule over the nations of the world. “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee to this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1).” “And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail and thou shalt be above only, and thou not beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command this day, to observe and to do them (Deut. 28:13). In this same chapter, God warns Israel of curses that would fall upon her if she did not obey him.

God promised to make Abraham a great nation. God said he would bless those who blessed Israel and he would curse those who cursed Israel. “And in thee shall all the families (nations) of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3).” The actions of righteous Israel would be a blessing to all the nations of the world. Likewise, the actions of rebellious Israel would have disastrous consequences for Israel and the world. Revelation 17 reveals the kings of the earth have committed fornication with the harlot “and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication (Rev. 17:2).” “When Israel was faithful to God, offering up sacrifices for the nations. The world was at peace; when Israel broke the covenant, the world was in turmoil.”²⁸¹

Where does Mystery Babylon sit? She sits on seven mountains in Israel that are intimately associated with the Mystery Kingdom and revealed by King Jesus in the kingdom book (Matthew). The harlot’s foundation is a beast with seven heads and these heads are symbolic of spiritual truth. We can understand the focus of satanic rule through these symbols, which are the chosen people of God, the chosen land of God, and the chosen mountains of God. Satan must use both earthly and spiritual agents. Through these symbols, we also can understand the hierarchy of satanic rule over the kingdoms of the world.

CONCLUSION



The book of Revelation is about two spiritual kingdoms in conflict. It is about the triumphant return of Jesus Christ to end evil control over the world and to manifest the rule of God over all the earth. Revelation 17 reveals that Mystery Babylon sits on the seven heads of a beast. The heads are described as seven mountains and seven kings. The belief that the seven mountains and seven kings symbolize the Seven Hills of Rome and seven emperors of Rome has no biblical foundation. It is a contrivance dreamed up in the minds of men. The beast with seven heads does not symbolize the Roman Empire. The beast points to the rule of Satan and his evil principalities that have exerted influence over successive kingdoms that rise to rule over the mountains, land, and people of God.

Jesus reveals a distinct group of seven mountains in Matthew. These mountains are associated with all the kingdoms of the world and the rule over all in the spiritual and physical realms. No mountains are more associated with the truth and power of God, but no mountains have witnessed greater blasphemy. Six past empires until the time of John had ruled over these mountains. The Antichrist will rule over these same mountains. Jesus returns to one of these seven mountains to enact

judgment against all evil. The seven mountains of Matthew reveal the “great city” of Revelation 17 will be found in Israel.

In the book of Daniel, the power of the kingdoms represented by beasts is taken away and is given to “one like the Son of man” coming with the clouds of heaven. The Son of man comes before the “Ancient of Days.” And there was given unto him dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7-14).

There is a group of seven mountains revealed in the Bible that is associated with the “clouds of heaven” and the judgement of kingdoms that rose to power to rule over Israel. They are related to the return of Jesus and the crushing of the kingdoms of men under the control of Satan (Matthew. 24:30; Matthew 26:64; Rev. 1:7).

Rather than focusing on the kingdoms of the world, we have focused on the nation and the mountains of God. Israel takes center stage when we are talking about kingdom rule. The kingdoms of the world are important because of their relationship with Israel.²⁸² Rather than focusing on the words of pagans, we have looked to the Word and Wisdom of God.

Jesus on seven mountains in the kingdom book points to the very throne of God. Where Jesus is, there is the true ark of God. Where Jesus is, there is the true temple of God.²⁸³ In the eleventh chapter of Revelation, the seventh trumpet sounds and loud voices from heaven proclaim that “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.” The authority and power announced on the seventh mountain of Matthew by Jesus will go forth from the mountains of Israel. The glimpse of glory shown at the Mount of Transfiguration will be manifested over all the earth.

The eleventh chapter of Revelation ends with the opening of the temple in heaven, and within the temple, we see the ark. “And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and an earthquake, and

great hail.” In the fifteenth chapter of Revelation, we are told of seven angels with seven plagues. The seven angels are given seven bowls filled with the wrath of God to be poured out upon the earth. These seven angels bring the bowls out of the heavenly temple where the heavenly ark is found. The temple becomes filled with the smoke of the glory of the Lord. Ford points out that this phenomenon is seen at important instances in the history of Israel, and each case points to the dwelling place of God and the destiny of God’s people. “In this chapter, it seems to be associated with the imminent fall of Babylon and the establishment of the true city or dwelling place of God.”²⁸⁴

The earthly temple was the dwelling place of God on the mountain of God. Ancient Babylon desecrated the temple and its furnishings. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus speaks of the future desecration of the temple that was revealed by the prophet Daniel (Matt. 24:15-16). Jesus was blasphemed, tortured, and crucified. A generation later, the Roman Empire would desecrate and destroy the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

The great blasphemy that causes desolation in Revelation is the direct result of the desecration and blasphemy. The blasphemy associated with the great harlot, the seven mountains, and the seven kings also has to do with the desecration of the temple site and the mountains of Israel. The desecrations of the temple and the mountains of Israel through pagan worship and the control of these mountains by evil empires are evidence of great blasphemy. We can understand why the judgment against Babylon the Great, and all the enemies of Jesus Christ would be seen coming from the ark and temple in heaven.

It is one of the seven angels given the bowls full of God’s judgment that talks to John. The angel tells him about the harlot that sits on the seven heads of the beast. One of the seven angels also reveals to John the glory of the great heavenly city. These angels are associated with the throne of God, the heavenly ark, and the heavenly temple. We see that the throne of God and the true ark and temple of God are intimately associated with the seven mountains of Matthew, not the hills of Rome.

The foundation of New Jerusalem is the living Word of God and the

very throne of God. The ark and the temple were typical of Jesus and the heavenly city of New Jerusalem. Revelation 21:16 reveals the length, breadth, and height of New Jerusalem are equal just like the ark. The most important aspect of New Jerusalem is that God will dwell among his people.

The word Zion initially pointed to David's tabernacle and the city of David. It later came to include the area of the temple. The temple site was God's dwelling place on earth. There will be no need for a temple in New Jerusalem, for Jesus will be there. The Bible speaks of a time in the future when the people of Israel will no longer remember the ark, for Jesus will dwell with them. "Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will live with them (Rev. 21:3)."

In his book *The Tabernacle of David*, Conner states the temple of God in the Old Testament was a type of the city of God, the New Jerusalem. He makes seventeen comparisons between the temple and the city of God. He compares "the typical truths in the temple with that which is set forth in the city of God, the eternal habitation of the redeemed."²⁸⁵

"In most New Testament passages the thought of the city merged with the thought of the temple. The ecclesiological significance of the two images may at certain points be considered the same. For example, what made either the city or the temple holy was the presence in it of the living God."²⁸⁶ We see the symbolism of the heavenly city (the community of God's people in the presence of their God) with the mountains of Matthew. The truth proclaimed on these mountains is the foundation of the community of God's people. The meeting of Jesus with his people on these mountains is a portrait of the heavenly city of New Jerusalem. The community of the redeemed will forever be with their Lord. This great city stands in contrast to Mystery Babylon, the great earthly city that will be destroyed at the end of this age.

Satan has a kingdom comprised of evil principalities, which he has used to effect his rule over the mountains and people of God. Since he tried so hard to stop Daniel from receiving the prophecy about the rise of kingdoms that rule over Israel and the rise of the Antichrist,

we should try our utmost to understand the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation.²⁸⁷

In the second part of this series, we will focus on the great harlot. She sits on seven mountains and seven empires, but the effect of her rule has been manifested throughout the earth and across the span of centuries. The Bible reveals the theological foundation of her rule. We will see how the identity of Babylon, the “great city” is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. It may not be the city most think is obvious. We will also focus on the Antichrist and his kingdom. We will see where the Antichrist comes from, the extent of his empire, and how his destiny and the destiny of the “great city” are entwined. We will answer why the beast and the nations symbolized by the ten horns hate the harlot with such a burning passion. The number 666 is the number associated with a man in the Bible. We will see that the number 666 identifies the Antichrist, not by counting the numbers associated with the letters of his name, but by his very specific acts.

APPENDIX I



The Meaning of Seven Mountains in Jewish Thought and Literature

The Church in the first century was predominantly Jewish. The Jews were uniquely chosen by God to receive, chronicle, and teach the Word of God. How would the Jews living at the time the book of Revelation was written understand kingdom rule in association with seven mountains? Is there a specific meaning associated with a group of seven mountains in Jewish religious thought and literature? We will see the idea of a group of seven mountains related to the throne of God and the kingdom of God was not something alien to the Jewish mind. Likewise, we find seven mountains associated with Satan's kingdom and seven fallen angels.

Donaldson, in his book *Jesus on the Mountain*, reveals that in Second Temple Judaism, the mountain was believed to be the site of God's throne (Jub. 1:17-29; En. 18:8, 24:2, 25:6; cf. Tob. 13:11; Sib. Or.

3:716-720). The mountain is revealed as the site where the Messiah will rule over all the nations (Ezra 4 Ch. 13; 2 Bar. 40:1-4; cf. Ps. Sol. 17:23-51).²⁸⁸ Donaldson points out that three different times Enoch comes upon a mountain that goes all the way to heaven (Enoch 17:2, 18:6-8, 24:2-25:7). In the last two cases, the mountain is in the center of seven mountains that are described as the throne of God.²⁸⁹

Kallas points out that Hebrew thought was different from the Greek way of thinking. The Greek language was built on nouns, while the Hebrew language was built on verbs. The Greeks thought logically and consistently, while the Hebrews thought paradoxically. The Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote the Bible. We must learn to think the way they thought. We must “learn to hold opposites together in tension.”²⁹⁰ We need to think paradoxically. The Hebrews could look at seven mountains and see that they could be associated with both good and evil. We see the duality in the meaning of seven mountains in Jewish thought and literature. We find seven mountains are associated with the kingdom and the throne of God, but we also see seven mountains are associated with evil angels and the judgment of God. In Jewish thought, the seven mountains are associated first and foremost with the spiritual realm, not the kingdoms ruled by men.

We will consider two books from the Apocrypha and the book of Enoch, which is classified as an Old Testament Pseudepigrapha. We do not refer to these books as Scripture but as ancient historical records of Jewish religious thought. The Jews have never accepted the Apocrypha or the Pseudepigrapha as Scripture. The writings of Enoch and Second Esdras both speak of seven mountains. When we refer to the book of Enoch, we are referring to 1 Enoch.

The Book of Jude quotes the book of Enoch. This writing existed centuries before the birth of Jesus. This book was widely read for several centuries after Jesus's time on earth. There are many phrases in the New Testament that are also found in Enoch. Tertullian contended that the Jews had rejected Enoch because this book contained passages that clearly pointed to Jesus.²⁹¹

Why should we consider these books? Many of the early churches considered the reading of these books as appropriate and helpful. We should also be inclined. These writings hold more wisdom and value than the words of pagans. These books reflect the thoughts of the people specially chosen by God to reveal his truth to the world.

Luke 9:35 reveals that during the transfiguration of Christ, a voice out of the cloud, says, “This is my beloved Son: hear him.” The exact translation in the original Greek reads: *This is my Son, the Elect One: hear him*. “The Greek phrase *ho eklelemenos* that is used means the *Elect One*.²⁹² The term *Elect One* is used fourteen times in the book of Enoch. In Enoch, we are told of the Elect One who would “sit upon the throne of glory” and the Elect One who would “dwell in the midst of them.”²⁹³

On the Mount of Transfiguration, we are told that a bright cloud overshadowed those on the mountain and a voice out of the cloud declared, “This is my Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” This statement is like the One promised in Enoch.²⁹⁴ This declaration is made on the fifth mountain in Matthew (Matt. 17:5).

Enoch speaks of the immorality of angels, which is also dealt with in Psalm 82. We need to look at portions of this book, for it speaks of different groups of seven mountains. The eighteenth chapter of Enoch speaks of seven mountains of precious stones, three to the east and three to the west. The mountain in the middle rises to the very throne of God. In the same chapter, we see a stark contrast between the mountains associated with the throne of God and seven mountains in a place described as desolate. It is Mystery Babylon that sits on seven mountains, and this great city will face desolation and utter destruction.

The seven mountains of Revelation are associated with blasphemy, but these same mountains have witnessed the truth and glory of God. In Enoch, there is also duality associated with seven mountains. Seven mountains are associated not only with the throne of God, but there are also seven mountains related to evil.

In chapter twenty-one, Enoch again speaks of an empty place. “And I saw there neither a heaven above nor an earth below, but a chaotic and

terrible place and there I saw seven stars of heaven bound together in it like great mountains and burning with fire.” Then the angel said to me, “This place is the ultimate end of heaven and earth: it is the prison house for the stars and the powers of heaven.”

In Revelation, we are told that the seven angels of the Lord are symbolized by “seven stars.” These seven stars in Enoch are fallen angels; they are also referred to as “seven burning mountains.” These seven mountains represent seven imprisoned fallen angels.²⁹⁵ We contend that there is biblical support that angels are symbolized by mountains as well as stars in the Bible. This concept is also seen in an ancient Jewish religious writing.

“The idea that God dwells on a mountain has a long and rich history in the ancient Near East.” “The description of God’s throne is reminiscent of Exodus 24:9-10, but the closest biblical parallel to the present passage is Ezekiel 28:13-19. As that text now stands, Eden, the garden of God (cf. 1 Enoch 24-25) is identified with ‘the mountain of God’ (Ezek. 28:13-14). It is replete with precious stones of many kinds.” The rebellion of the king of Tyrus (Ezek. 28:16-18) and the rebellion of Lucifer (Isa, 14:12-15) involved an attempt to seize God’s throne on the holy mountain.²⁹⁶ Many recognize that the statement about the king of Tyrus cannot refer to any earthly ruler. This king can refer to only Satan.

In the twenty-fourth chapter, Enoch sees another group of seven mountains. “The stones were brilliant and beautiful; all were brilliant and splendid to behold; and beautiful was their surface. Three mountains were toward the east and strengthened by being placed upon another, and three were toward the south, strengthened in a similar manner. There were likewise deep valleys, which did not approach each other. And the seventh mountain was amid them. In length, they all resembled the seat of a throne, and odoriferous trees surrounded them.”

Among these trees, there was one that stood out for its fragrance. Enoch is then told, “This high mountain which thou hast seen, whose summit is like the throne of God, His throne where the Holy Great One, the Lord of Glory, the Eternal King, will sit, when he shall come

down to visit the earth with goodness.” In a book that was written several centuries before Christ, we see the throne of the Lord when he shall reign upon the earth is associated with seven mountains. In the kingdom book (Matthew) where Jesus proclaims the kingdom of God, there are seven places that God explicitly calls a mountain. Jesus on the mountains of Matthew manifests the very authority and power of God. Jesus on these mountains alludes to the very throne of God.

“And as for this fragrant tree no mortal is permitted to touch it till the great judgment, when he shall take vengeance on all and bring (everything) to its consummation forever. It shall be given to the righteous and holy. Its fruit shall be for food to the elect: it shall be transplanted to the holy place, to the temple of the Lord, the Eternal King. Then shall they rejoice with joy and be glad, And into the holy place shall they enter; And its fragrance shall be in their bones, And they shall live a long life on earth, Such as thy fathers lived: And in their days shall no sorrow or plague or torment or calamity touch them. Then blessed I the God of Glory, the Eternal King, who hath prepared such things for the righteous, and hath created them and promised to give to them.”²⁹⁷ Upon seven mountains in Matthew, Jesus, the Elect One, manifests the very power and glory of the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches, feeds, and heals the people on the mountains of Israel. He provides bread for the body and soul.

In the thirty-first chapter, Enoch again sees seven mountains before he arrives at the garden of righteousness where the tree of knowledge is found. The tree of life was in the Garden of Eden along with the tree of knowledge. The book of Enoch associates the throne of God with seven mountains. Eden, along with the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, is associated with seven mountains. The punishment of fallen angels is associated with the symbolism of seven mountains and desolation.

Before he rebelled, Lucifer held a high position in the administration of God’s kingdom. He was in Eden, the garden of God. “Every precious stone was his covering. “Thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire”

(Ezek. 28:13-14). Lucifer was cast from the mountain of God when he lost his position of rule. In Enoch, the mountain of God is seen with six other mountains. The Garden of Eden is associated with dominion over the earth. Adam was driven out of Eden when he lost his position of rule. For a time, Satan gained dominion. The Bible calls him “the prince of this world.” It would not be surprising to a Jew of the first century that the rule over the earth would be related to seven mountains. It would not be surprising that satanic control over Israel and the world would also be associated with seven mountains.

In Enoch, there are different groups of seven mountains contrasted. These different groups of seven mountains point to the spiritual. The throne of God is seen with seven mountains. We also see fallen angels are related to a group of seven mountains. Our premise is that the seven mountains of Revelation 17 spiritually symbolize seven fallen angels. The control of Satan over the kingdoms of the world contrasts with the rule that God has ordained for his chosen nation as “the head of all nations.” The truth and glory revealed on the seven mountains of Matthew stand in stark contrast to the blasphemy associated with the seven mountains of Revelation.

The Bible reveals the mountain symbol points to spiritual rule and spiritual dominion. Satan mimics the kingdom of God. Seven angels are intimately associated with God’s kingdom. These seven angels help to reveal and manifest the will of God for the earth and his people. We also can understand that Satan likewise would use seven principalities (fallen angels) in the administration of his kingdom in a mocking affront to God.

In the ancient world, there was an interplay between the symbols of the “mountains” and “stars” in depicting kingly rule. “The dominant figure in the cylinder seal from Mari is the god seated on the mountain. His scepter identifies him with the ‘king of the gods.’ This cylinder also depicts two ‘stars’ before the god upon his throne. They can be understood as the ‘stars’ of El.”²⁹⁸

In the second book of Esdras, seven mountains are referred to in

connection with the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah and the nation of Israel. “I will send you help, my servants Isaiah and Jeremiah. According to their counsel, I have consecrated and prepared for you twelve trees loaded with various fruits, and the same number of springs flowing with milk and honey, and seven mighty mountains on which roses and lilies grow; by these, I will fill your children with joy.”²⁹⁹

In Esdras, we are told of seven mighty mountains, and by these with the twelve trees with fruit and the twelve springs, Israel’s children will experience joy. On seven mountains in Israel, Matthew reveals that Jesus manifested the kingdom of God. It was on these seven mountains that the Messiah of Israel proclaimed the truth, power, and love of God. We can see from the Bible that the symbol of the mountain points to spiritual power and spiritual rule. We see from the Bible and ancient religious writings that mountains symbolize spiritual rulers, spiritual dominion, and spiritual ruling authority, not mere earthly kingdoms.

“The idea of a mountain (replaced in some pictures by a pillar or a tree) which arises in the center of the earth to support the heavens is a concept of Indo-European origin.” The mountain is also common in Semitic circles but not as a bearer of the heavens. It functions instead as a connecting link between heaven and earth.”³⁰⁰ The symbol of the “mountain” can depict fallen angels who are the pillars that help support Satan’s kingdom, but they are also the connecting link between him and his earthly agents (kings of the earth).

An early Christian literary work called the *Shepherd of Hermas* reveals how the early Church, which was overwhelmingly Jewish, viewed the symbolism associated with the mountain. This book refers to a vision of twelve mountains, and these mountains refer to the twelve tribes of Israel and the Promised Land. Here we see that the mountain symbol is not directly associated with Rome or Babylon. It is directly associated with Israel.³⁰¹

There were some in the early Church who interpreted the seven mountains to refer to the seven millennia of world history.³⁰² Daniel revealed that the consummation of this present age is directly tied to the

fulfillment of the plans of God concerning Israel. There were those in the early Church who realized that the seven mountains were associated with Israel, kingdom rule throughout history, and the consummation of evil control over the earth.

The idea of seven mountains associated with Israel, fallen angels, and the throne of God was not something alien to the Jewish mind. We see these associations chronicled in historical religious writings. The Jews were chosen by God to reveal his truth to the world. When history is viewed in light of biblical truth, we find Israel is at the center. The Bible chronicles the significance of Israel in world history. It also reveals that Israel is at the center of the great conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness. There has been no greater witness of this struggle than the mountains of Israel. When Jesus returns to set up his kingdom, the mountains of Israel will be the focus of God and the people of all the nations of the earth for generation after generation.

APPENDIX II



The Seven Mountains in Matthew Follow the Pattern of the Series of Sevens in Revelation

Some have noticed how the liturgical octave pattern is associated with Revelation and, specifically, the series of sevens in this prophetic book.³⁰³ The other groups of sevens in the book of Revelation except the seven churches follow the pattern where the seventh in a series becomes the first of a new series. This pattern was well known to the Jewish members in the early Church. The pattern is referred to as “seven to eight equals one.”³⁰⁴ This pattern is found in the ceremonial calendar of the Old Covenant.

We see this octave pattern with the creation of the world and man. “God rests from his creative work, but by this resting, he creates “a new act which is the eight-and-first day.”³⁰⁵ On the sixth day, Christ was victorious, and he rests from the labor of his ministry and great sacrifice. “But the sabbath-day which follows is in itself nothing, it has no

content: it is simply the restful sepulcher out of which, with the eight and first day, the resurrection springs.”

The seventh day was the Jewish Sabbath. The Sabbath is held over. It is replaced by the first of a new series, which is Sunday. Jesus arose in triumph on Sunday, which was the eighth day and the first day of a new week.³⁰⁶ The eighth day was the day of victory for the Messiah over the forces of evil and the inauguration of a new age.³⁰⁷ “The number eight is associated with resurrection and regeneration and the beginning of a new era or order.”³⁰⁸

The seven kings of Revelation 17 give way to the eighth king. This eighth king is really the whole beast.³⁰⁹ This beast “once was, now is not and will come” (Rev. 17:8). The beast is the antithesis of the Lamb, which is described as “who is, and who was, and is to come.” We know that Jesus is the Lamb of God. Jesus is God and has always been God. He was God in the flesh (God incarnate), and he will come to rule and reign over the earth. The beast symbolizes satanic rule over the mountains of God through successive empires. However, the beast ultimately symbolizes Satan. Evil rule reaches its zenith when the seven kings give way to the eighth. When Satan is cast down to earth, he will possess the body of the man known as the Antichrist. The eighth king is the merging of the chief principality of evil and the earthly king. The eighth king is the direct rule of Satan on the earth.

We should not be surprised that the consummation of the rule of man and the beginning of the rule of Jesus Christ over all the kingdoms of the world will also be associated with the same pattern. The Day of the Lord is associated with the Sabbath rest that God has promised his people. The Sabbath ultimately points to the victory over evil and the eternal rest for the people of God when he will dwell with them and continually bless them. The seven mountains of Matthew are related to the victory of Jesus Christ and the realization of his coming kingdom.

The Feast of Tabernacles has to do with the eternal Sabbath rest of the Lord’s people, and this feast is connected to the mountains of Matthew. This feast lasted for eight days. It will be an eternal feast where the

nations of the earth will go to praise and honor God for his greatness and his mercy. The Feast of Tabernacles is associated with offerings for seven days. “The seven days of offerings are crowned by an eighth day of holy convocation (Lev. 23:33-36), a day of solemn rest like the first day of that feast” (Lev. 23:39).³¹⁰ The future fulfillment of this feast will take place when King Jesus returns to dwell with his people forever.

On the mountains of Matthew, Jesus portrays the truth associated with the Feast of Tabernacles. God was with his people in the desert journey and was their light and guided their path. The Spirit of God dwelled amid Israel. He provided for the needs of his people and protected them from their enemies. In the book of Matthew, Jesus is upon the mountains of Israel. He provides for the body, soul, and spirit of man. He confronts and defeats the forces of evil. The same Shekinah glory that was with Israel in the desert radiates from Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The apostle Peter associated what transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Feast of Tabernacles. Peter offered to build three tabernacles: one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Luke 9:33 states that Peter did not realize the implications of what he had said. So, what was wrong with Peter’s statement? He was not wrong about associating the event with the Feast of Tabernacles. Peter possibly believed this glorious event signaled Christ was inaugurating the Messianic kingdom on the earth at that time. One can understand why with the appearance of Moses and Elijah, the voice of God, and the enveloping Shekinah glory. This glorious event was a brief glimpse of the future glory of the Messianic kingdom when Christ would tabernacle with his people forever.³¹¹ We are told Jesus leaves the Mount of Olives and enters Jerusalem with the crowds waving palm branches and singing Psalm 118 (Matt. 21). Palm branches were used at the Feast of Tabernacles, and Psalm 118 was sung during the procession of the feast.

The Mount of Olives is the sixth place called a mountain by God in Matthew. However, in the chronology of Jesus’s time on earth, this site is the final mountain event. Jesus ascended to heaven from this mountain

in a cloud. In Acts 1:12, we are told that the Mount of Olives was a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem. This mount is associated with the end of the evil rule and eternal rest for the people of God. In the future, Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives. This mountain witnessed the truth of God, but it also witnessed the blasphemy that was allowed by Solomon and many other kings who ruled over Israel. This mountain has seen centuries of desecration of the holy mount.

The pattern of "seven to eight equals one" is seen with the seven mountains of Matthew. Jeremiah 51 refers to Satan and the kingdom of the Antichrist, which he will control at the end of this age, as "the destroying mountain." This exact phrase is used to describe the Mount of Olives in 2 Kings 23:13. The fourteenth chapter of Zechariah reveals that when Christ returns to the Mount of Olives, it splits into two parts. This mountain becomes two mountains with a great valley between them. This great valley provides an escape for the people of Israel from their enemies. This event calls to mind the Exodus from Egypt, with the splitting of the Red Sea and the splitting of the Jordan River, which allowed the tribes of Israel entry into the Promised Land.

With the splitting of the Mount of Olives in two, the seven mountains of Matthew become eight. Others have viewed the division of this mount into two mountains.³¹² How do we know God considers the splitting of the Mount of Olives in two parts as two mountains? The literal translation of the Hebrew refers to the valley created when this mountain separates in two parts as "the valley of My mountains."³¹³

The seven mountains of Matthew lead to an eighth mountain, and this leads to something new and glorious. This eighth mountain signals the destruction of Satan's kingdom and the inauguration of Christ's rule throughout the earth. The eighth mountain leads to the cleansed Temple Mount that has witnessed centuries of idolatry. Ezekiel reveals that the glory of God that had departed centuries before will once again return to the Temple Mount. This eighth mountain leads to one glorious eternal kingdom, which is the kingdom of Christ that is likened to a stone

that becomes “a great mountain and fills the whole earth.” This one great mountain points to the eternal Sabbath rest for the people of God.

We believe the two mountains of brass described in Zechariah 6 refer to the splitting of the Mount of Olives. The mountain splits in two sections when Jesus’s feet stand on the Mount. In Revelation 1:15, Jesus’s feet are described as fine brass. Brass can symbolize the righteous judgment of God. The forces of heaven sent to destroy wickedness in the world at the end of this age come forth from these two mountains. It is fitting that the forces of God would go forth from this site because it is where Jesus first instructed the disciples about the judgment of the nations. The mountains of Matthew are directly associated with the defeat of the harlot and wickedness in the world.

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